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THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,
IN FOUR BOOKS:
WITH
COPIOUS NOTES.

Οὕτω κατὰ κράτος ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου ἤξανε καὶ ἐσχυεν.
"So mightily grew the word, and was confirmed."

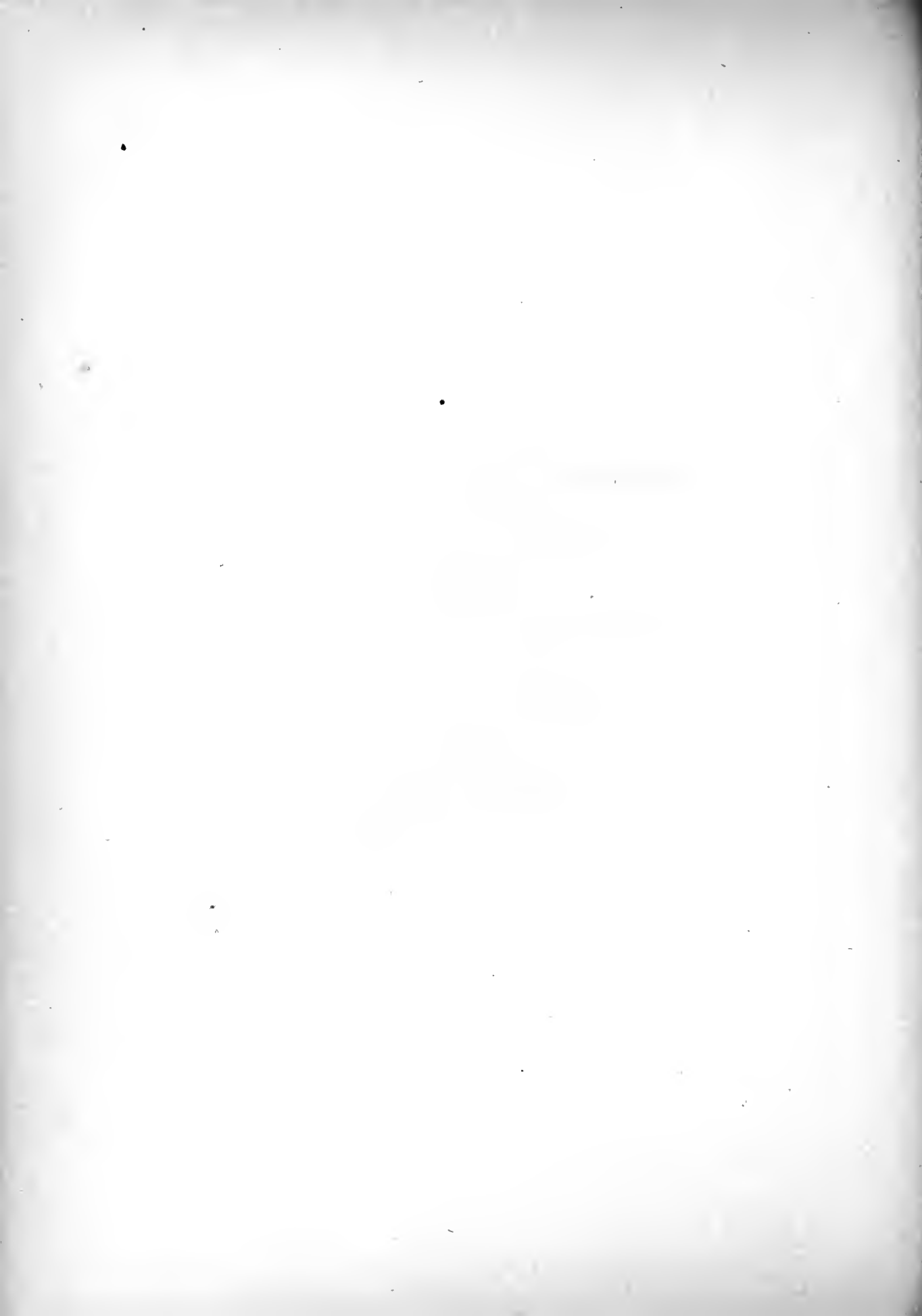
Δεῖ με καὶ Ῥώμην ἰδεῖν.
"I must see Rome also."

Acts, xix, 20, 21.

BY THE
REV. CHARLES CONSTANTINE PISE, D. D.

AUTHOR OF "ALYTHEIA," "ST. IGNATIUS AND HIS FIRST
COMPANIONS," ETC., ETC.

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INTRODUCTION.

ON the last day of the month of June, several years ago, I found myself in the metropolis of the Christian world. This day is celebrated, with extraordinary festivity and pomp, both in the Church and in the city. Early in the morning, having assisted at mass in the Vatican, I set out on a kind of ecclesiastical pilgrimage to the places which were consecrated by the blood of St. Peter and St. Paul. The beautiful sky of Italy appeared more radiant and mild than ever, as I bent my way to the mount *Janiculum*, and thence, out of the walls, to the *Salvian Fountains*. The former venerable for the martyrdom of the chief of the Apostles, and the latter, of the "Vessel of Election." My taste, in early youth, when engaged in studying at Rome, was somewhat similar to that of St. Jerome, who thus describes the eagerness with which he was wont to visit these sacred places: "When I was a boy, pursuing my studies at Rome, I was accustomed to go round, on Sundays, with companions of the same age and pursuits, to the sepulchres of the apostles and the tombs of the

martyrs. We often went down into catacombs, cut out in the depths of the earth," &c. (1)

It was amid such scenes—and particularly at the *Salvian fountains*—that the idea first presented itself to my mind of rendering into verse the "Acts of the Apostles." But it was only recently, after reading the elegant posthumous work of the celebrated Jesuit, Père de Ligny, that I resolved to enter upon the task: in the accomplishment of which, I take pride in acknowledging myself indebted to that great man for the arrangement, connection, unity, and notes, of the composition. (2)

Perhaps the manner and style of the work may tend to produce a two-fold effect: first, to invite the attention of all Christians to the study of this inspired narrative; and secondly, to convince the public, that the Catholic Church loves to unlock the fountains of the Scriptures to her faithful and humble children. If I succeed in bringing about this result, my hopes will be crowned, and my labors abundantly rewarded.

(1) "Dum essem Romæ puer, et liberalibus studiis erudirer, solebam cum cæteris ejusdem ætatis et propositi diebus dominicis sepulchra apostolorum et martyrum circumire; crebroque cryptas ingredi in terrarum profunda defossas," &c. (Tom. v. p. 968. Ed. Vall.)

(2) It is but just to add, that for the preface and appendix, I am indebted to the same eloquent and learned writer.

P R E F A C E.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES may be considered an appendix to the life of Christ, as contained in the four gospels: or, perhaps more properly still, the confirmation and completion of the gospels. For in them Jesus had made great promises, had announced sublime truths, had taught a code of perfect morality. None of his words could fall ineffectually to the ground: all should, in due season, be accomplished. It was necessary, therefore, that his promises should be fulfilled by the event; that his mysteries should be recognised by the faith of the people; and that his moral law, so far above all human strength, should, nevertheless, be adopted and faithfully observed. Thus Jesus Christ would not have spoken in vain; and the divinity of his mission would be demonstrated by its success in conquering the errors and vices of the world.

This is what we are taught in the Acts of the Apostles. Christ had hardly quitted the earth before the Holy Ghost, so often and solemnly promised, descended upon the Apostles:—these weak men, clothed with the virtue of the Most High on

a sudden, dared present themselves before the Jews and preach the name of Christ. They proclaimed as their God and Messiah, and the only author of their salvation, that Jesus, who had fallen a victim to their hatred and cruelty. Thousands were immediately converted; and from their union with the Apostles results the Christian Church, composed of a flock and shepherds. All the nations of the earth are called, and crowd into her fold. Peter receives the first; Paul gathers the multitude. The wild olive is ingrafted on the sweet; Israel is the common trunk; and of the two united people is formed the chosen race, the true Israel—or, as the Apostle styles it, the *Israel of God*, (1)—the term of his promises, the object of his tender complacency.

Thus, in spite of the opposition of nature, and the prejudices of reason, the CRUCIFIED ONE is adored; and, what is still more astonishing, his code of morality is practised:—that morality, more pure and sublime than ever had been conceived by human wisdom. The mind comprehends it, the passions submit to it. And a multitude of vicious men, united together as it were by chance, become instantaneously a society of saints. The most esteemed philosophers never were able to reform the smallest village; and now a prodigious reform, the work of a few poor fishermen, has

(1) Galatians, vi. 16.

spread from Jerusalem, the cradle of Christianity, to the extreme boundaries of the habitable earth. Its progress was so rapid, that they who had known Christ in person—his contemporaries and disciples—lived long enough to see with their own eyes the accomplishment of the prophecy which they had heard from his adorable lips: *And I, if I be lifted from the earth, will draw all things to myself.* (1)

He who does not discern the finger of God in all this, must be blind indeed. "If there be any prodigy more astonishing than that of the establishment of Religion, it is the ineredulity of those who refuse to yield to the evidence of its proofs." (2) With this most striking remark of the venerable Father de Ligny, I will leave the reader to his own considerations.

(1) John, xii. 32.

(2) S'il y a un prodige plus étonnant que celui de l'établissement du Christianisme, c'est l'incrédulité de ceux qui refusent de se rendre à l'évidence de ses preuves.

THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

BOOK FIRST.⁽¹⁾

CONTENTS:

Return of the Disciples from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem—Entrance into the Cenacle—Discourse of St. Peter, followed by the choice of Matthias in the place of Judas—Descent of the Holy Ghost—Gift of tongues—Preaching of St. Peter—Conversion of three thousand persons—The lame man cured at the gate of the temple—Second preaching of St. Peter—Five thousand converted—Peter and John in prison—Council of Priests—Discourse of St. Peter—Silence imposed on the Apostles—Their prayer followed by a new infusion of the Holy Ghost—Sanctity of the first Christians—Barnabas—Ananias and Sapphira—Miracles of the Apostles—Their imprisonment and deliverance by an Angel—Advice of Gamaliel—The Apostles scourged—Murmur of the Greeks against the Hebrews—Election and ordination of the seven Deacons—Stephen full of grace and strength—The Jews dispute with him—He is seized and dragged before the Council—His discourse—His death—Saul consents to it, and holds the garments of his executioners.

ANGEL of Light! by whom the Psalmist's harp
Was strung to inspiration, and the souls
Of ancient seers with prophecy were fired,
Descend from heaven anew, and guide me, while
The Apostles and their glorious Acts I sing.

(1) From the first to the eighth chapter, inclusively.

From Olivet the Saviour took his flight
 Back to the skies, whence he had deigned to stoop,
 Clad in the form of mortal, to redeem
 The sin-born children of a fallen sire.
 Deep clouds enveloped him from earthly sight;
 And his disciples, strengthened in their faith,
 "Adored Him," though invisible become. (1)
 Their charity, enlightened and refined,
 Soothed their affliction for the saddening loss
 They now sustained; and well they understood
 The words he uttered: *If, indeed, ye love,*
Ye will rejoice at this, because I go
Back to my Father. (2) Ceasing to behold
 With eyes of flesh, they saw, with eyes of faith,
 The Saviour seated on his heavenly throne,
 Divine and only Monarch of this world; (3)
 Whose wish it is that other thrones be filled
 By those who, with him, suffer to the end.

Elate with joy, they sought Jerusalem; (4)
 And there abode in that superior room,
 Styled Cenacle, where Peter dwelt, and John,
 And James, and Andrew, and Bartholomew,
 Simon Zelotes, Philip, Matthew, James—
 Alpheus' son—and James' brother, Jude.

(1) Luke xxiv. 52. Et ipsi adorantes regressi sunt in Jerusalem, cum gaudio magno.

(2) John xiv. 28. Si diligeretis me, gauderetis utique, quia vado ad Patrem.

(3) Jude 4. Solum Domiuatorem, et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.

(4) Luke xxiv. 52

With one accord they persevered in prayer, (1)
 With Mary (2) and the brethren of their Lord. (3)

One vacant place remained to be supplied.
 Twelve patriarchs, as of old, there now must be.
 Peter, invested with primatial power,
 Christ's representative—the Church's head,
 Or, by a special order of his Lord,
 Or, by an inspiration from on high,
 Rose, in those days, amid the assembled friends,
 And spake aloud, in these prophetic words:
 "Brethren, accomplished must the Scripture be
 And what the Holy Spirit hath foretold,
 By David's mouth, of Judas, who betrayed
 Jesus, our Master, on the fatal mount.
 He hath been one of us—for the same work
 With us associate in the ministry.

(1) They prayed *unanimously* and *perseveringly*. Prayer, unanimity in prayer, perseverance in prayer, three things, which, if united, do violence to heaven. They might have sufficed to draw down the Holy Ghost, even though he had not been promised.

(2) The text mentions the other women also. They had followed Christ in his missions, and had not abandoned him in his passion, and were witnesses of his resurrection, and, perhaps, also his ascension. Being no longer with him, they were with what-
 ever could recall him to their minds—his mother, brethren, disciples.

(3) Who believed in him, convinced by the miracle of his resurrection. We must not confound with them the three who have been named in the verse,—James, son of Alphaeus, Simon and Jude, brothers of James, who are styled in the Scripture, brethren of the Lord. These believed before they were called to the apostleship, as it is written that it was among his disciples that Jesus chose his apostles. Luke vi. 13.

A field of woe he hath, indeed, acquired,
 Bought with the price of his iniquity ; (1)
 And, having hanged himself upon a tree,
 Down from his ruptured body fell exposed
 His entrails pendent to the public gaze.
 Yes, all Jerusalem have seen the sight ;
 And in their tongue the field hath since been styled
 HACELDEMA, which means—the field of blood.
 For, it is written in the book of Psalms :
 ‘ Their dwelling shall be desolate and forlorn,
 And his Episcopate another take.’ (2)
 Then from our true companions who have stood
 Firm to our Master, since the eventful day
 When John baptized him, to the glorious hour
 Of his departure to his native skies,
 One must be chosen to proclaim with us

(1) He acquired, in effect, the field in the only manner in which he could: for, it is believed, that he was the first interred there—as one of the strangers for whom it was intended.

(2) What was foretold and accomplished. But the prediction is turned into an imprecation. There are, in the Psalms, hundreds of similar instances. Charitable persons are sometimes pained to find how much evil is invoked upon enemies and persecutors. But they do not see that the evil is foretold and not desired ; but the prediction is changed, as it should be, in poetry, and especially the Psalms, the sublimest of all poetry. We find similar examples in the profane poets, when they announce calamities which were past, but existed not at the time when the personages speak who are brought upon the scene. See Virgil's *Æneid*, Book IV. :—

*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor
 Qui face Dardanio ferroque sequare colonos
 Nunc olim quocunque dabunt se tempore vires,
 Littora littoribus contraria, finctibus undas
 Imprecor arma armis, pugnent ipsique nepotes.*

His marvellous resurrection from the dead." (1)
 Two were proposed—Joseph called Barsabas,
 Surnamed the Just Man, and Matthias; then,
 In fervent prayer they sought the will of heaven:—
 "O Lord," they said, "who read'st the hearts of men,
 Make known to us which of these two to choose
 In place of Judas, for the ministry;
 And in the apostolate, from which he fell,
 That he might go unto his proper place."
 He spake, and lots were given in their hands; (2)
 And on Matthias fell the choice of God. (3)
 Thus was he numbered with the eleven; thus
 Prepared the Holy Spirit to receive
 In a degree proportioned to his state;
 And thus were duly filled the mystic thrones
 To which the tribes of Israel should yield.

Now was the vessel of the Church equipped (4)
 With Pilot, rudder, sails, and mariners:
 One thing alone was wanting: 'twas the breath

(1) Religion is not entirely included in the resurrection, but is founded entirely on that miracle.

(2) This shows that lots may be permitted under certain circumstances. Moreover, the apostles acted here by inspiration, and therefore require no apology. By the Canon Law, (*Cap. Ecclesia, de Sortilegiis, sub finem*.) it has been forbidden to have recourse to such means in the choice of ministers and pastors of the Church. What was good once is not always so; nay, it might even be bad, on account of the abuse it may occasion, and, therefore, it is better never to have recourse to them.

(3) *Two were chosen by the judgment of men; but one was chosen by the Divine judgment.* Aug. *Enarr. in Ps. 30.*

(4) Chap. ii.

Which, like a soul, should move her, and bring out
 Her glorious resources in full play. (1)
 The hour arrived; the days of Pentecost (2)
 Were now accomplished, and all things prepared.
 All were assembled in the Cenacle; (3)
 When, of a sudden, like a rushing wind,
 A noise was heard from heaven—and the room

(1) This is the beautiful idea of St. Chrysostom. *Hom. de Spiritu S.*

(2) A Greek word, signifying fifty days, or the fiftieth day, which amounts to the same. It was a festival of the Jews before a Christian festival. For the former, it was the anniversary of the day on which God gave the law to their fathers on Sinai: and the law commanded them to offer on that day the first fruits of the harvest, according to the rite prescribed in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus. It was only after this offering was made, that they were permitted to apply the scythe to their corn:—a figure of the abundant harvest which was to fall under the scythe of the apostles, and of which the chief of the apostles gathered and offered the first fruits on this day. For Christians, among whom one only oblation has taken the place of all the offerings and sacrifices, Pentecost is the anniversary of the descent of the Holy Ghost, of the promulgation of the evangelical law, and the foundation of the Christian religion. All this was the work of one day, or, it may be said, of one hour. For, according to the narrative of St. Luke, it appears difficult to believe that more than one hour elapsed from the coming of the Holy Ghost to the conversion of three thousand of Peter's hearers.

(3) *All*; that is, at least six and twenty persons, who were present at the election of Matthias. The literal sense induces this belief: and the general opinion does not exclude any who were in the Cenacle with the apostles; neither Mary, nor the holy women. It was for them like the sacrament of Confirmation. The Spirit who *breatheth where he listeth*, communicated himself to all in the measure he willed, and diversified his gifts according to the various ends to which he destined all who composed that assembly.

Where they were seated shook beneath the sound.
 Then came there down, and stood upon each head,
 Strange tongues, as if of fire, which parted seemed : (1)
 And with the Holy Ghost they all were filled,
 And all began in divers tongues to speak.

Then were there gathered, at Jerusalem,
 Jews from all nations of the earth—good men,
 And given to religion : (2) when the noise
 Spread through the city of this strange event,
 In crowds they hastened to the favored spot,
 And heard, each one, the language of their land.
 They were beside themselves, and marvelling said :
 “Are not these men who speak our various tongues
 All Galileans ? how, then, doth it chauce
 That they address us in our native tongues ?
 For we are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
 Mesopotamians, and from Phrygia,
 Pontus, Judea, (3) Cappadocia,

(1) It was not, then, real fire. We cannot compare a thing with itself. We cannot, for example, say, that water is like water. The same with regard to the wind. The noise is said to have *resembled* a strong wind : it was not, therefore, wind. In like manner, the tongues had only the brightness and agility of fire. These were symbols by which the Holy Ghost made known his nature, properties, and effects. We may say the same of the Dove, under the figure of which he descended visibly on Christ after his baptism by John.

(2) So called, because it was the duty of religion that had assembled them at Jerusalem.

(3) It would seem that the Jews, inhabiting Judea, should not be surprised to hear them speaking their language. They who are of opinion that that language was different from the one used in Galilee, are mistaken. It is clear, from many texts of Scrip-

Egypt, Pamphylia, Asia, and the parts
 Of Lybia bordering on Cyrene's realm,
 Strangers from Rome, both Jews and Proselytes, (1)
 Cretans, Arabians, all, in our own tongues,
 Have heard them speak the wondrous things of
 God." (2)
 And much they marvelled, and, astonished, said
 One to the other: What doth all this mean?

ture, that the Jews and Galileans understood one another. The expression of the servant-maid to Peter—*Thou art a Galilean, for thy language betrays thee*—proves this rather than contradicts it: for they spoke together, and understood each other. And what betrayed Peter was not the language, but the pronunciation, or dialect, peculiar to the Galileans. What, then, was the cause of the astonishment of the Jew of Judea? It was this: a Jew who understood the apostles saw by his side a Greek, a Roman, a Persian, who understood them equally. This to him was inexplicable. For, if they speak Greek, or Latin, how is it that he could understand them who knew neither of those languages? or, if they spoke his language, how could others, unacquainted with it, understand them?

By the gift of tongues, the apostles spoke each of the languages of those whom they had to treat with. They understood them when spoken. When they spoke, at the same time, to men of different tongues, they were understood by all; as the sermon of St. Peter proves. But how could this be done? God knows how. We, however, comprehend how an apostle, pronouncing a word in any language, could, through the power of God, be understood. That power could so modify the air that the word might be changed into Greek, for the Greek, and, on striking the Roman ear, into Latin.

(1) *Proselytes*, a Greek word, signifying strangers; or, rather, strangers aggregated to a people. Gentiles, who embraced Judaism, were styled by that name.

(2) When filled with the spirit of God, we can speak of nothing but God. Bad Jews called this intoxication; bad Christians call it fanaticism.

But others mocked them, as if drunk with wine :
 Vain men ! blaspheming what they did not know.
 But soon were they confounded : Peter stood
 Eneircled with the eleven, and thus spake :—
 “ Jews, and all ye inhabitants who dwell
 Within Jerusalem, lend me your ears.
 These men are not, as ye imagine, drunk,
 For yet 'tis but the third hour of the day : (1)
 But now the prophecy must be fulfilled
 By Joel sung of old :—*Thus saith the Lord :*
Lo ! in the latter days will I pour out
My spirit o'er all flesh ; (2) then shall your sons
And daughters prophesy, and your young men
Visions behold, your aged men dream dreams.
Then in the heavens on high, on earth beneath,
Will I make prodigies appear—of blood,
Of fire, and vapor of red smoke ; and lo !
The sun to darkness shall be changed, the moon
Turned into blood, before that mighty day,
That day of terror, when the Lord shall come . (3)

(1) Nine o'clock. We learn from Josephus that, on feast-days, the Jews were accustomed to take no food until mid-day. We know not the special law that bound them to this observance ; it was a practice of devotion, but so universal, that to say it was only the third hour, was sufficient to imply that they were yet fasting.

(2) Joel says : *I will pour out my spirit*. St. Peter said : *I will pour out of my spirit* ; which seems to signify less. The prophet expresses what was poured out ; the apostle what had been received. All which was fulfilled in the first age of the Church ; and, during all time, will the Spirit of God be diffused among all nations, without distinction.

(3) It appears that the prophet and apostle both refer to the day of judgment. This is the interpretation of St. Chrysostom. St. Peter calls it the *manifest* day ; Joel, the *terrible*.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever
On the Lord's name will call, shall then be saved.
 On the foundations by the prophets laid,
 The apostle rears the gospel-edifice :
 Shows that the Lord to be henceforth invoked,
 And through whose power salvation is obtained,
 Is He who agonized upon the cross.
 Impelled by superhuman force, he dares
 Proclaim his Master risen : "Israelites,"
 He thus again addressed them, "hear my voice !
 Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved
 Of God among you, by the prodigies
 And signs he wrought, which ye yourselves have seen,
 But who, by God's determined will, was nailed (1)
 By wicked men upon the tree, and slain,
 Is risen from the dead—he having loosed

(1) God wished Jesus Christ to suffer all that he did suffer. By his foreknowledge he knew that the Jews would make him suffer precisely as he did : he let them act ; and therefore it is said he delivered him to them. The will of God, which issued the decree, was holy and just ; the malice of the Jews, who executed it, cruel and detestable. God did not will that malice ; but he did not prevent it from acting, because it served to fulfil his designs. Thus an action may be justly willed, and criminally executed. God is irreproachable ; the Jews are inexcusable.

They who reject the infallibility of the divine foreknowledge are reduced to the necessity of affirming, that God forced the Jews to act as they did. They make God ignorant and wicked.

They who in their adversity do not think of God, who wills it, but regard only the doings of men, are ignorant if they do not know that God wills it ; and are wicked if, contrary to the order of God, they hate the persons who have occasioned it. *The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away*, were the words of Job, although it was Satan who acted against him.

The sorrows of the grave, by whose dark power
 It was impossible he should be holden :— (1)
 For 'tis of Him the royal prophet sang :
The Lord I set before my face, he is
At my right hand, that I may not be moved.
Therefore my heart exulted, and my tongue
Sent forth its songs of gladness, for my flesh
Will rest in hope, because thou wilt not leave
My soul in hell, nor let thy Holy One (2)
Taste of corruption ; thou hast traced the ways
Of life with thy bright finger, and my heart

(1) In Greek, the *sorrows of death* ; *ῥόγας τοῦ θανάτου*. We may add, that in scriptural parlance it sometimes means the tomb. Some interpreters understand by the *sorrows of death*, the sufferings, mental and corporeal, of Christ, which he endured to his last breath, but from which he was delivered, as well as from corruption and the other humiliating consequences of burial, from which he was exempt. All this is true, and may be sustained by certain expressions scattered through the text. But there are others which can be understood only of *hell* ; not, indeed, of the damned, but those subterranean places where the souls of the just were detained before heaven was opened. This is the language of David, by which St. Paul intends to prove what he advances : *Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell*. Here *hell* cannot signify the tomb ; for on this supposition *my soul* would mean *my body* ! We must, then, recognise two meanings : that his soul was not to be left in *hell*, nor his body in the tomb.

(2) *The Holy One*, by excellence. Calvin and Beza translated thus : *Thou wilt not leave my body in the tomb*. Neither one nor the other believed in his descent into hell.

Before the ascension of Christ, the souls of the dead descended into hell, that is to say, *limbo*. To resuscitate any one, it was necessary to make the body quit the tomb, and the soul, *hell*. We must not, therefore, be surprised at the manner in which David speaks.

Leaps with delight before thy countenance. (1)
 Brethren," he added, "let me freely speak :
 David, the patriarch, hath long since died,
 And to the tomb his body was consigned,—
 For to this day his sepulchre is seen.
 He was a prophet, and full well he knew
 That God had sealed the promise with an oath,
 That from his loins should spring, in after days,
 One who should sit upon his regal throne :
 Thus, with prophetic vision, he proclaimed
 Christ's resurrection—triumphing o'er hell,
 And seeing not corruption in the grave.
 This Jesus God hath raised to life again :
 And of the wonder we are witnesses.
 Exalted, then, by the right hand of God,
 He hath fulfilled the promise, and poured forth
 The Holy Ghost—as ye have seen and heard. (2)
 For David did not to the heavens ascend ;
 Yet hath he sung : *The Lord said to my Lord,*
Sit thou upon my right hand, till I make
Thy enemies thy footstool. Let the house
 Of Israel, therefore, know most certainly,
 That God hath constituted LORD and CHRIST
 Him, whom ye doomed to die upon the cross."

(1) Christ always had the *face* of God before him ; but his sensible joy was suspended during the time of his passion. He recovers that joy immediately after his death.

(2) *How can He who gives the Holy Ghost, be otherwise than God ?* said St. Augustine to the Arians, lib. xv. *de Trin.* cap. 26 *And how great the God who gives a God !* They saw and heard Him by his effects, which rendered sensible his all-powerful operation.

Whilst Peter thus addressed these touching strains,
 The Holy Paraclete in silence spake
 To the consenting hearts of those who heard.
 A lively sorrow pierced them, to have been
 The homicides of Jesus,—deep remorse,
 Regret compunctive seized them; and they said
 To Peter and the rest: What shall we do? (1)
 “Do penance,” (2) was the answer. With these
 words
 Jesus and John their ministry began,—
 “Do penance all, and in the name of Christ (3)
 Be ye baptized—remitted, thus, shall be
 Your sins, and every one shall then receive (4)

(1) Salvation is near when the heart exclaims: *What shall we do?*

(2) He means the penance that must precede baptism. It consists in the detestation of the past, joined with a firm resolution for the future; to which, according to the Council of Trent, must be added an incipient love of God. This is what theologians call the *virtue* of penance. It is entirely in the heart. Satisfactory works form no part of it, although they will follow when the heart is truly penitent.

(3) That is to say, the baptism instituted by Christ, which derives all its virtue from the merits of Christ, and in which Christ is named as the second person of the Trinity. Some ancient writers, of respectable authority, were of opinion that the apostles began to baptize with this form: *I baptize thee in the name of Jesus Christ*. But this opinion has been abandoned. For Christ gave orders to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; which order is too precise and absolute to be changed or dispensed with. There is no positive fact, showing that the apostles ever set it aside. It is to distinguish the baptism of Christ from that of John, that Peter required them to be *baptized in the name of Jesus Christ*.

(4) Sanctifying grace, according to the language of St. Paul:

The Holy Spirit ; for to you is made
 The promise, to your children, and to those
 Who are far off, whomever God shall call."
 Yet other proofs he failed not to advance.
 Their minds, enlightened first, he next must move ;
 With earnest exhortation did he cry :
 "Flee from this race perverse, and save yourselves!"
 About three thousand heard, and, on that day,
 All were baptized, and added to the Church. (1)

Such were the first-fruits of the Holy Ghost,
 And such the master-pieces of his Grace.
 Most perfect of all Christians were these first,
 Not only just, but saints of high degree.
 With fervent spirits did they persevere
 In the apostles' doctrine, and partake
 In the communion of the bread, and prayers. (2)

The charity of God is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who has been given unto us. We may also understand the sacrament of Confirmation, which the apostles ordinarily conferred after baptism.

(1) Thus was the Church founded. Christ had made the pastors, the pastors the people, who, when they entered into it, found the government established. The people, then, cannot arrogate to themselves the right of giving pastors, without overturning its primitive constitution. They may contribute to the choice by their wishes and testimony, and, at most, by their presentation. But the choice, properly called, and jurisdiction must come from a higher source. Such was Christianity in its cradle ; such will it be to the end of ages.

(2) The Eucharist, according to most interpreters. Others understand the distribution of common bread. The words, *breaking of the bread*, may admit of either sense. The former should be preferred, not only because it is universally followed, but also on

A general fear now came on ev'ry soul :
 For many signs and wonders were performed
 By the apostles, at Jerusalem.
 The faithful, who believed, together dwelt,
 And their possessions were in common all : (1)
 Their goods they sold, and just division made
 To all, as each one needed.—Daily to
 The temple they repaired, with one accord,
 To pray ; and, breaking bread from house to house,
 With joy, and great simplicity of heart (2)
 They took their meat, with gratitude to Heaven,
 Acceptable alike to God and men.
 And every day were added, by the Lord,
 Numbers to those predestined to be saved.
 Still, the last stroke was wanting to the work :— (3)

account of the circumstances with which it is associated. It is natural to suppose that the *breaking of bread*, which is mentioned between two acts of religion, such as assiduity in hearing the word of God and prayer, is rather the communion of the eucharistic bread than the eating of common bread.

(1) This is the most perfect idea of society. Plato had conceived it ; but, following the custom of philosophers, who seldom imagine any thing good without mixing with it some extravagances, "the divine Plato" wished all things to be in common, without exception. For the rest, his idea had been deemed impracticable, or regarded as a dream. Behold it here perfectly purified and realized by the fishermen of Bethsaida !

The arm of God has not been shortened. The apostles of the new world established similar communities among the Indian race, to the shame of the most polished nations, which existed more than a century.

(2) Here it is more probable that the *breaking of bread* signifies the manducation of common bread. The expression that follows, *they took their food, &c.*, authorizes this meaning.

(3) Chap. iii.

By persecution must the Church be tried,
 Ere it be rendered perfect: Earth and Hell,
 As yet both silent and inactive stood;
 Whether by terror paralyzed and hushed,
 Or chained by the omnipotence of God.

But not of long duration slept the calm:
 The powers of darkness, by a grand event,
 And wonderful as grand, were roused to arms.
 Then was the tocsin sounded—war declared—
 And conflict dire commenced, of which the event
 Confusion spread among the infernal ranks.
 Behold the source from which this warfare sprang:—
 'Twas the ninth hour of prayer, (1) and John went up
 With Peter to the temple; and there lay
 A certain man, lame from his mother's womb,
 Hard by the gate-way called the Beautiful,
 Imploring alms of those who passed along.
 As on the threshold Peter stood and John,
 He cried to them for alms: "Look upon us,"
 Fastening their eyes upon the wretched man,
 They answered. He obeyed; and steadfastly
 Fixed his wan gaze upon them, with the hope
 That they would, pitying, grant him some relief.

(1) Three o'clock. The Jews assembled in the temple to pray in common, after the manner of our Vespers. It is probable that this prayer preceded immediately or accompanied the evening sacrifice, which was offered daily, according to the ordinance of Moses, in Exodus, chap. ix. It was at three o'clock that Jesus Christ died. *Erat autem fere hora sexta, et tenebræ factæ sunt in universam terram usque ad horam nonam: et obscuratus est sol . . . et exspiravit.*

Then Peter said : " Silver nor gold have I, (1)
 But what I have that do I gladly give :
 Rise, in the name of CHRIST of Nazareth, (2)
 And walk ! " Extending forth his hand, meanwhile
 He raised him from the earth ; his limbs were nerved,
 And with a bound he leaped upon his feet,—
 Stood upright in his strength, and, giving thanks,
 Entered the temple with them ;—whilst the crowd
 Seeing, were struck with wonder, and praised God.
 For well they knew the poor lame mendicant,
 Who long was wont before the beauteous gate
 To sit, and ask for alms : they marvelled much,
 Seeing the miracle that had been wrought.
 And all the people, with amazement fill'd,
 Ran to the porch which is called Solomon's. (3)

(1) The Church now possesses gold and silver, and possesses them legitimately : but men fearing God, and who are the depositaries of that wealth, have sometimes to regret the poverty of the primitive times.

(2) The miracles wrought in the name of Christ were more glorious to him than if they had been performed in person. They proved that the power of Christ was not borrowed, but a power which he possesses as sovereign, and exercises, when he pleases, through his ministers.

(3) So called, as is conjectured, because it had been built by Solomon. Of course, the Babylonians must have spared it in part when they destroyed the temple. When the temple was rebuilt, this portico was repaired and made serviceable. At the time of which we are treating, it was used by the Gentiles who came to adore at Jerusalem. Besides this vestibule, there was another for the Jews, and which all who were not purified were forbidden to enter. The others remained with the Gentiles in the portico of Solomon. Then came the part called the HOLY, which the priests alone could enter who there burned incense on the altar of perfumes, all the people standing without—as appears in

The crowd was great ; and Peter did not fail
 To profit by the occasion ; who addressed,
 With strength and sweetness, marvellously blent,
 The words that follow, capable to touch
 The hardest hearts, and make the stoutest tremble :—
 “ What, Israelites, do you behold in this
 So wonderful ? as if, of our own power,
 Or of ourselves, we made this man to walk.
 No, it was not : the God of Abraham,
 The God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
 Our fathers’ God hath glorified his Son,
 JESUS, whom ye betrayed, whom ye denied,
 Before the face of Pilate—that weak judge—
 Who deemed him guiltless, and would have released
 Ye, on the contrary, denied, condemned,
 The Holy and the Just One—ye preferred
 A murderer before Him—and consigned
 To death the Author of all life ;—whom God
 Raised up again, as we are witnesses.
 ’Twas faith in His all-potent name that gave (1)
 Sound health to this poor sufferer, whom you see,
 And whom you know, now perfectly restored.”
 Their crime so deeply censured, what remained
 But to announce its awful chastisement ?
 Perhaps the Jews were looking for their doom :

the history of Zachary, Luke i. The *Holy of Holies* was separated by a veil, which was rent at the moment Christ expired. The high priest alone had the right to enter there once a year.

(1) In Latin, *fides, quæ per eum est*. Most translators render it, faith *which we have in him* ; others, *which comes from him*. The first is more natural, the second more literal ; both are good. In Greek : *Kal ἐν τῇ πίστει τοῦ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ.*

Perhaps they trembled, at that solemn hour,
 Lest the indignant minister of Him,
 The Just, the Powerful, whom they had slain,
 Should bid the avenging earth beneath them yawn
 And bury them in ruin ; or call down
 Flames to devour them, from insulted Heaven.
 But no ; they need not fear : from Peter's lips
 No curse terrific issued ;—words of peace,
 Of grace, of hope, and safety, they distilled
 In accents bland and merciful. “ I know,”
 He added, “ brethren, yes, I know that ye
 Through ignorance acted, and your rulers too : (1)
 But ye have thereby caused to be fulfilled
 What God had promised by his prophets' mouth :
 Then be ye penitent, converted be,
 That your iniquities may be effaced : (2)

(1) Christ himself seemed to excuse them on account of their ignorance. We must see how, and to what extent, that ignorance could excuse them. They were not ignorant that Christ was innocent, and in this they were inexcusable. But they did not know that he was the true Messiah and the only Son of God ; in which they were less guilty than if they had treated him as they did, knowing him in that quality. But was not their ignorance, in this regard, criminal ? Yes ; because he had given more than sufficient marks to oblige them to recognise it. Yet such was the meekness of Jesus, that, in order to excuse them, it is merely necessary that their malice might have been greater. What an example for Christians, obliged to resemble him in this point as in any other : And what a condemnation of those who, when they are made to suffer, perhaps innocently, the smallest evil, avenge it with atrocious imprecations and implacable resentments !

(2) The conjunction here, both in Greek and Latin, signifies, *To the end that*. It suspends the sense, and renders it incomplete. Nothing better proves the fidelity of the Church in the conservation of the sacred deposit of the Scriptures, than to see

That when the blest refreshment-times shall come
 Brought by the presence of the Son of God, (1)
 Jesus, the CHRIST, who has been preached to you.
 In heaven, indeed, he will abide until (2)
 The days of restitution, (3) which the Lord
 Hath by his prophet, long ago, announced;
 For Moses said: *A prophet shall the Lord*
Raise up among his brethren like to me:
Him ye shall hear according to all things
Which, in his wisdom, he shall speak to you.
And it shall come to pass, that every soul
Which will not hear that prophet shall not live.
 These days the holy seers have all proclaimed
 From Samuel down through each succeeding age.
 Sons of the prophets, and the testament,

that she does not suffer the retrenchment of a single syllable, (*ut*,
 *πῶς,) which *seems* to be left only to embarrass the sense!

(1) Here, as in many other parts of Scripture, by "refreshment" is meant the bliss of Heaven. The meaning of the text is Do penance, in order to obtain the remission of your sins; that when Christ shall come to judge the world, ye may be found among the just, and be made participators of the joys of Heaven.

(2) He is in heaven in his natural and visible condition; but this does not prevent his being really on earth, concealed under the eucharistic species. This remark is made, because the Calvinists have cited this text against the real presence.

(3) The heavens and earth will be renewed, as St. Peter affirms, 2 epist. iii. 13: *But we look for new heavens and a new earth, according to his promise, in which justice dwelleth.* That is, the order, disturbed by the rebellion of angel and man, will be perfectly re-established: all the good will be happy, all the wicked miserable. God's will then will be accomplished; and all creatures will be held under the absolute and eternal dominion either of his mercy or his justice.

Made to our sires, are ye, when thus God spake
 To Abraham: *And in thy holy seed*
Shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
 'Tis true that blessing shall to all extend;
 But most distinguished shall his children be:
 For unto you the promise first is made (1)
 That Israel shall be saved: the Lord hath sent
 His Son, from death arisen, to impart
 His blessings to you all, that every one

(1) Prodigy of fidelity on the part of God. They massacred his only Son: yet, on account of the promise made to their fathers, to them *first* must salvation, brought by his Son into the world, be announced. They will now persecute his ministers, scourge them, stone them, crucify them: nevertheless, mercy is still for them, and during forty years it is held out, but after that term it will be taken from them: *For forty years*, said the Lord, *was I near this generation, and I said, Their heart is astray. They have not considered my ways. But I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into the place of my rest.*

This was said of the race then living, as well as of that which God had led out of the land of Egypt, towards the land of promise, which they had forfeited by their crimes. Of all generations that composed the succession of the people of God, these were the most favored and the most criminal.

Christians, who are more corrupt than infidels—they who, in a holy profession, are more depraved than ordinary men of the world—are represented by these two generations. Let them tremble at these dreadful words: *I have sworn in my wrath, &c.*

It is true that he bore with the first during forty years: but we must not forget that he gave the Ninevites but forty days. His divine justice is not regulated by the understanding of mortals. If he deals more mercifully with some than with others, he does not fail to give all alike the means of escaping the infliction of his vengeance. By repentance and satisfaction his ire may be instantly averted: if the sinner continues to insult him, and perseveres in his iniquities, vengeance will inevitably overtake him, whether it be in the space of forty days or forty years.

May be converted from his evil ways."
 Language so touching, and so dread withal,
 • What bosom could resist? Stamped, as it was, (1)
 By Heaven's own seal—the miracle achieved
 On the lame beggar, in the public gaze—
 Five thousand men—it is not given to say
 How many women—yielded to the truth.
 While yet he spake, and by his side stood John
 Adding his testimony, as the crowds
 Were gathering still more eagerly around,
 Lo! through the portals of the temple rushed
 The Priests and Sadducees upon them, grieved
 And maddened at the doctrine which they taught,
 In Christ, the Resurrection from the dead. (2)
 Then were they seized upon, and "put in hold"
 Until the morrow, for 'twas waxing late.
 Shadows of night were falling from the hills
 Upon the temple's gorgeous portico;
 And where the tramp of countless feet was heard,
 Silence lay musing all the livelong night.

(1) Chap. iv

(2) The Sadducees denied the resurrection. The Pharisees believed it. These opposite sentiments rendered the two sects irreconcilable. But the Pharisees could not endure to hear the resurrection preached in the name of Christ: and hence they united, in this instance, with the Sadducees. So do heretics all unite, no matter how they differ among themselves, against the true Church and her visible head. This coalition has united, for a time, the most discordant errors and opinions, in order to bring them all to bear, in one desperate effort of hostility, against the Church, which condemns them all, and which can hold no communion with sects that have gone out from her, and have attempted to rend the seamless vest of her divine Spouse.

Day dawned anew, and woke Jerusalem :
 And o'er the gardens of Gethsemane
 The sun's glad beams came dancing from the east ;
 The hum again is heard through all the streets,
 And murmurs thicken round the apostles' cell.
 Then met in council chiefs, and scribes, and priests,
 And all the ancients—venerable men—
 Convened to question the apostles : there
 Annas, the High Priest, in due pomp arrayed,
 Presided ; near his person Caiphas sat,
 And John, and Alexander, and all those
 Whose veins were warmed by sacerdotal blood.
 Before this proud assembly were arraigned
 The humble Peter and inglorious John.
 They enter : mid that glare and majesty
 Did they recoil with terror ?—no ; they stood
 Undaunted, undismayed ; for they were now
 Filled with supernal strength and light divine.

“Peter and John,”—thus did the pontiff speak—
 “Ye preach the resurrection, and have cured
 The lame man near the temple ; in what name,
 And by what power, do ye perform such acts,
 And teach such doctrines ? Speak, that we may hear.”

What answer can they make—these lowly men—
 Men once so timid as to shrink with fear,
 Not from the princes, but their servant-maids !
 Standing sublime amid the assembled priests,
 And fired with wisdom from the Holy Ghost,
 Peter began . “Ancients and princes, hear :—

If we are questioned by you through what power,
 And in what name, we healed the man infirm,
 Who lingered on the temple's vestibule,
 Then be it known to all now gathered here
 Under this dome, and to the people all
 Of Israel, that by the name and power
 Of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, our Lord, (1)
 Nailed to the cross by you, but risen again,
 We gave this man, now standing by my side, (2)
 Whom well you know, full use of all his limbs.
 It was through Him of whom the Psalmist sings:
This stone rejected by the builders,—you,
The same the corner's head hath now become. (3)

(1) It was under this name, written in three languages, and fixed on the cross, that Christ was crucified. His enemies gave it through contempt. (Acts, vi.) Yet it is under this name that Peter designates him before his persecutors, and dares propose him as the only object of their faith and hope. The apostles did not temporize with their prejudices, but triumphed over them. They never were ashamed of the opprobrium of their Master, but through it were they raised to those sublime thrones on which they have received the homage of the whole world.

(2) To have seen with their own eyes the infirm man cured in the name of Jesus Christ arisen, was a proof of the resurrection of Christ as decisive as if they had witnessed it. Consequently, if they did not then believe it, neither would they have believed the testimony of their own eyes and of all Jerusalem.

Let us say that they believed, but they did not wish the world to believe; and thus we may reconcile the evidence of the fact with their efforts to obscure it. Knowing what the human passions are, we are not surprised at this contradiction between their light and their conduct.

(3) This prophecy is found in the 107th Psalm. Christ had cited it a little before his passion, (Matt. xxi.,) and the Jews understood that it was of them and of himself that he spoke.

'Through Him, from whom alone salvation springs,
For there is given to men no other name,
Beneath the heavens, whereby we must be saved."

He ceased ; and mute with admiration sat
The assembly, chained in silence : they beheld
The godlike bearing, heard the strains sublime,
Of men who, but the other day, were low,
And ignorant, and timid ; who had been
Associates of the Nazarene in life,
And, since his crucifixion, preached him God.
Nor could they aught reply ; for sound and whole
The beggar stood before the council, healed
By Peter, through the omnipotence of Christ.

At length the High Priest, rising on his throne,
Perplexed in feature, and in voice subdued,
Bade the apostles from the hall retire :
Who meekly but triumphantly obeyed.

Then, as if freed from some strange influence
Which held them captive, priests, and scribes, and all
The sages of the council,—they began,
In sudden susurrations, to give vent
To their deep-hushed amazement, and exclaimed :
" What shall we do with these most wondrous men ? (1)

(1) This expression shows how strong is truth. Wit, science, opulence, authority, are on the side of its aggressors. Its defenders are weak, low, ignorant. Yet, because truth is on their side, they are neither embarrassed as to what they ought to say nor what they ought to do ; while their fierce enemies are reduced to ask the question : *What shall we do ?* This advantage was the

Wondrous in doctrine—not less so in deed.
 Shall we deny the cure which all the world
 Hath witnessed in Jerusalem? 'twere vain:
 A deed so public vindicates assent,
 Defies all cavil, and must be believed.
 The object of their power was not far off,
 Nor hidden in obscurity, but near
 At hand, before the people and ourselves,—
 For many a year a sad, familiar wretch,
 Grovelling upon the temple's vestibule;
 But now he leaps as agile as the doe,
 And ceases not to mingle with the crowds—
 A speaking testimony of the fact.
 This is too true. In order to arrest,
 In the incipient germ, this novel sect,
 Named after Him styled Christ, let us decree
 That, under penalties the most severe,
 They shall not dare, henceforward, in that name
 Address the people, lest it farther spread."

An inconsistent sentence, yet approved.
 The wise and learned oft are sorry dupes
 Of human passions; and would *stifle* truth
 Which all their jealousy cannot *destroy*.

Great men and proud, accustomed to behold
 The lowly eringing at their haughty feet,
 Deemed it would be an easy task to check

mere prelude to the great victory which this same truth, weak
 and unarmed, was about to achieve over the powers of the
 universe

These men of nothing, who would not presume
 Oppose their will, nor dare provoke their ire.
 Their fierce resolve determined to enforce,
 They bade the soldiers usher in again
 'The champions of the name and power of Christ.

Behold they enter ! gentle as two lambs,
 And yet with souls inexorably firm,
 They stand in silence, looking, with fixed gaze,
 Upon the High Priest, who, with faltering voice,
 And troubled accents, thus addressed them both :
 " Before this council—mighty and august—
 Ye have been ordered to appear again,
 To hear the sentence which ye must obey :
 No more, at any time, in any place,
 To speak of Christ, or in his name to teach."

" Ancients, and venerable priests," replied,
 With noble mien, and independence calm,
 Peter and John ; " to you we now appeal :
 Judge ye, for ye are sages of the law,
 Doth justice not demand, that we obey
 The Omnipotent, in preference to you ? (1)

(1) Should there be two masters, one of whom is subordinate to the other, and their wills opposed, their orders contrary, to do the will of the superior master, and execute his orders, is simply to obey. To do the will and execute the orders of the inferior, is not to obey, but to revolt against the common Master. The reply of St. Peter turns upon this maxim, the subversion of which would be the destruction of religion and society. This is so evident that children know it, but interest is so blind that it often disregards it.

Man has within his breast a greater master than any on earth—his conscience ; which he must always oppose to the most abso.

What we have seen and heard we preach abroad ;
And preach we must what we have seen and heard."

Upon such champions menaces were lost :
Why then repeat them ? Yet the priests and chiefs
Hurled them anew against those fearless men.
"Depart," they said, "unpunished ; but—beware !"
To punish them they dared not, for they knew
That all the people praised them and admired :
With their own eyes they saw the mendicant,
Who during forty years had crippled lain,
And helpless, now miraculously cured.

Triumphant from the hall the apostles walked,
And hurried to their brethren, whom they told
Of all that passed ;—how they had been arraigned,
And what the princes, priests, and ancients said,
To force them into silence, and prevent
Their preaching Jesus risen to life again.
Great was the joy of all ; with one accord
They raised their voices in this solemn prayer : (1)
"O Lord ! the heaven, the earth, the deep, and all
Whatever they contain, were formed by thee ;
They are the works of thy all-potent hand.
'Twas thou didst speak, when, by the Holy Ghost

lute power. If it be objected that God alone is superior to such power, I answer, then, that conscience is the voice of God.

This voice knows how to speak to the most wicked. Hence St. Peter did not hesitate to say : *Judge ye, &c.*

(2) According to the text, all raised their voices—all said the same prayer. Therefore they were inspired : otherwise there would have been a difference at least in the expressions.

Inspired, our father and thy servant David (1)
 Cried out of yore : *Why did the gentiles rage,*
And why the people meditate vain things ?
Kings of the earth and princes have conspired
Against the Lord, and stood against his Christ.
 For in the city, recently, combined
 Herod, and Pilate, with the Gentiles leagued, (2)
 And with all Israel, against thy Christ—
 Jesus, thy holy child—and thus fulfilled
 What by thy hand and counsel was decreed. (3)
 Upon their menaces, O Lord ! look down ;
 Give to thy servants to announce thy word
 With confidence unshaken, (4) inasmuch

(1) It appears that the Jews, when they spoke of David, were in the habit of calling him *our Father*. St. Peter, in his first discourse, styled him the *Patriarch David*, which signifies the same thing. We may remember, also, that when Jesus Christ made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem the people cried out : *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David*. He could have been effectually the father, at least, of the greater part of the tribe of Juda.

(2) Herod had not entered into the conspiracy. It was, as it were, by chance that Jesus was sent to him, and he did not desire his death—as Pilate declared : “He (Herod) did not find in him cause for death.” But though he did not *conspire*, yet he *concurred* in the passion of Christ. Derision is associated with homicide ; and the scoffer will be punished as the persecutor.

(3) The malice of the Jews was the proximate cause of the sufferings of Christ : his sufferings were the effect of that malice. God willed and determined the sufferings of which they were the effect, but not the malice which was the cause of them.

(4) They had been filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. On this occasion they received a new plenitude, and an increase of graces necessary to bear up against persecution. We have not always actual grace necessary to resist every temptation ; but if we ask for it, as the apostles did, it will be accorded at the moment of temptation, and the truth of the saying of St.

As thy right hand will be extended still
Cures to effect, and miracles to work,
Through Jesus, and in his most holy name!"

This prayer ascended to the Almighty's throne,
And marvellous signs were given that 'twas heard:
For, hardly had they finished it, before
The place, where they were congregated, shook
As with an earthquake; with the Holy Ghost
All were replenished, and with confidence
The word of God announced, while, with new strength
Of Jesus' resurrection from the tomb,
The apostles glorious testimony gave.

Great grace now reigned among the faithful; none
Was destitute: for at the apostles' feet
Owners of lands and houses, having sold
All their possessions, laid the common price,
Which, as they needed, every one partook. (1)
Joseph, styled Barnabas, (which signifies

Paul will be verified: *God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength.* (1 Cor. x. 13.)

(1) This community of goods was established, St. Jerome thinks, by St. Mark, in the Church of Alexandria. It does not appear, however, that the apostles attempted to establish it any where else. Perhaps the enterprise did not seem to them practicable. God, who does not call all men to the same degree of perfection, wished this, no doubt, to be the distinctive character of the first of all the churches.

To the honor of the Church, however, be it said, there have been always individuals who have followed this perfect life. Such are those religious men, among whom all things are common. They resemble the first Christians of Jerusalem.

The Son of Consolation,) in the Isle
Of Cyprus born,—a Levite,—sold his lands,
And, faithful, to the apostles brought the price.

But yet, so wayward is the human heart, (1)
Deceit and vice—like serpents amid flowers—
Into this sanctuary of the virtues crept.
The glory of Disinterestedness
Foul Avarice affected, with the hope,
By imposition, to obtain its prize.
The scheme was thwarted; for the hate is **suck**
Of God against deceitful, double hearts,
That even in the reign of grace and love
He signalized his vengeance by a stroke
As terrible as those he dealt of old,
When ruled the law of rigor and of fear.
Leaving, thereby, this warning: if He be
The God of Mercy, yet is He, not less,
(As we shall learn,) the God of Justice, too.

A certain Christian, Ananias named,
Together with his wife, Saphira, sold (2)

(1) Chap. v.

(2) Had Ananias made a vow of poverty, or not? *Interpreters* are divided. All the ancients are in the affirmative; and if we consider that this was the opinion of such men as Sts. Athanasius, Basil, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, &c., how can any doubt remain? What makes it more probable, is the word used in the Acts, *by fraud*. If he had not made a vow, there could have been no fraud in the transaction. His field, and the price of it, belonged to himself. He could have disposed of it at his will. What *fraud*, then, could he have been guilty of in sacrificing a part of it to the wants of his brethren? Far from sinning, he

A field, in concert, and retained, by fraud,
 Part of the price ; the other part he brought
 And duly laid before the apostles' feet.
 But Peter read his heart, and in these words
 Addressed the trembling culprit : " Ananias,
 Why hast thou yielded to the wily art
 Of Satan ? why allowed him to seduce
 Thy soul from virtue ?—tempting, thus, the Lord,
 And basely lying to the Holy Ghost.
 Thy land is sold, indeed, but of the price
 'Thou fraudulently hast retained a part.
 Before the land was sold, was it not thine ?
 And since, wast thou not master of the price ?
 Why then conceive imposture in thy heart ?
 Thou hast not lied to mortal, but to God." (1)

He spake ; and Ananias, as if riven
 By the red lightning-flash, fell down and died.
 All the bystanders looked aghast, and shuddered.

would have done a good work : less than if he had sacrificed the whole, but yet good and meritorious according to the sacrifice made. In this case, we cannot clearly see on what was founded the reproach of St. Peter, and why the chastisement was inflicted. But if Ananias had consecrated all his goods to the Lord by an irrevocable promise, all is explained. He committed a *fraud*, he lied to the Holy Ghost, he deserved death ; God is just, and his minister irreprehensible.

(1) After having said to Ananias, Thou hast lied to *the Holy Ghost*, St. Peter adds—to *God*. Therefore, as the fathers argued against Macedonius, the Holy Ghost is God. He had lied, in an equal manner, to the Father and the Son : it is by appropriation that he is said to have lied to the Holy Ghost, who is called by Jesus Christ, *the Spirit of truth*. (John, xiv. 17.)

The young men, rising, bore away the corpse,
And, filled with dread, consigned it to the earth.

Three hours elapsed, and lo! the wife appears
Of Ananias, ignorant of his doom.
As she drew nigh, "Woman," the apostle said,
"Tell me, for so much did you sell the lands?"
"Yea, for that price," she answered, "and no more."
"'Tis false; and, woman, why have ye agreed
To tempt the Spirit of the Lord together? (1)
Behold, the young men who have just interred
Thy husband—they are standing at the door:
And they shall bear thee likewise to thy grave."
She fell, that instant, and gave up the ghost. (2)
The young men laid her near her husband's side.
The hopes of hypocrites—thus Job declares— (3)
Shall perish with them: yea, instead of fame
They sought, through perjury, to gain, and fraud,
They have brought down confusion on their names,
And on their memory opprobrium stamped.

This prodigy of terror stood alone;

(1) They tempted the Spirit of the Lord, because they thought that St. Peter would not have any knowledge of their fraud. Among those who had witnessed the profusion with which the Holy Spirit had spread himself over the apostles, it was a kind of infidelity to believe that they had not received the gift of prophecy; and it is written: *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*.

(2) Porphyry, one of the most subtle opponents of Christianity, charges St. Peter with a crime, on account of the rigor he here exercised. But he forgot that it was God who struck the blow. The words of Peter were but a signal for it.

(3) *Spes Hypocritæ perihit.* Job, viii. 13.

Whilst, without number, favors were bestowed.
 Wonders and signs were, by the apostles' hands,
 Performed among the people ; with one soul,
 Upon the porch of Solomon, they met— (1)
 Where others durst not venture to intrude—
 Hailed by the acclamations of the crowd.

Meanwhile, of those who in the Lord believed—
 Women and men—the numbers daily swelled.
 Then might be seen, along the streets, the sick
 Stretched on their beds and couches, to the end
 That Peter's shadow, as he passed along,
 Might fall upon them, and their health restore. (2)
 And multitudes, from all the neighboring towns,
 Flocked to Jerusalem, bringing their sick,

(1) According to some, this means that many of the faithful kept at a distance, either through respect for the apostles, or for fear of bringing persecution upon themselves. Others think that it includes only those who did not believe ; who, either through fear or disrespect, did not mingle with the faithful. The first interpretation should be preferred.

On the porch of Solomon the apostles ordinarily assembled, because it could contain a great multitude ; because, constituting no part of the temple, strictly called, they could announce the word of God to all persons—men, women, Jews, infidels, &c. ; because they did not interrupt the ceremonies and sacrifices that were going on in the interior. The Church sprang from the bosom of the Synagogue, and the ancient temple was its cradle.

(2) We have noticed constantly, that, on all important occasions, it was *Peter who spoke*, thereby showing his authority, which was recognised by his brethren. He must also have been recognised as the chief of the apostles by the people. And for this reason it was, no doubt, that God desired the gift of miracles to be exercised by him more conspicuously than by the others.

And those tormented by the unclean spirits :—
The sick were healed, the infernal victims freed.

Such wondrous deeds the nation's chiefs aroused :
They could not view the marvellous success
With which the apostles taught, without despair.
If this new doctrine be not checked, at once,
In its triumphant progress, then farewell
To all their credit, influence, and power !
Which would they quietly resign ?—while crowds
On crowds were pressing round the fishermen !
What must be done ?—The High Priest seems to wake
As from a torpor ; fired with jealousy,
Aided and stimulated by his sect, (1)
(For they were Sadducees,) he rested not
Till on the apostles they laid hands again,
Who in the public prisons were immured.
But what is human power, when his right arm
The Omnipotent extends to avenge his cause !

'Twas now the midnight hour : the earth was
hushed :
But Peter slept not in the dungeon-gloom ;
To heaven his watchful orison went up,

(1) It was remarked before, that the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the dead. This sect had a two-fold interest in preventing the preaching of the apostles : for they preached the name of Jesus, and taught a doctrine which it rejected. We must be convinced how rotten were the foundations of religion and state, when the chief of the priesthood, and the first man of the nation, did not blush to be the partisan, or, at least, the fautor of materialism !

Appealing there for justice and support.
Heaven heard the prayer: the massy prison-gates
Fly open of a sudden; light intense
Breaks in upon them and dispels the gloom.
When lo! an angel of the Lord appears,
And, pointing to the portals, bids them rise,
And go their way in safety and in peace:—
“Stand in the temple, on the morrow; preach
Undaunted, unsubdued, the word of life.”
’Twas done: they went; and as the earliest dawn
Blushed on the temple, they were preaching Christ.

As day advanced, in council met again
The ancient men of Israel, and dispatched
Back to the prison, guards; who, when the gates
On their rough hinges were swung open, found
No prisoners in the cells. Breathless, with fear,
They hastened to the council, and declared,
That, as commanded, to the prison-gates
They went; which were well fastened, and without
The sentinels were duly at their posts;
But entering, they found no man within.
These tidings thrilled with wonder and surprise
The chief priests and the ancients. “Can it be?”
They muttered to each other. “Are they loose,
Despite the brazen locks and sleepless guards!”

“Yes, they are preaching; I have just now been
Up to the temple;”—thus a stranger cried,
Who chanced to enter. “Since the break of morn
They have been there—these very men whom yu

Secured in prison, as ye deemed, last night,—
Teaching the multitudes that flock to hear.”

Thither the officers, forthwith, repaired ;
And, as the stranger told, upon the porch
Stood the apostles, teaching ; whom the guards
Led to the council back : but violence
They dared not offer, lest the indignant crowd, (1)
Roused to revenge, should stone them in their wrath.

Once more in presence of the assembled chiefs
And sages of the law, the apostles stand :
With haughty tone, but yet with anxious mien,
The High Priest spoke : “ Already, more than once,
Our mandate has been issued, and despised :
Did we not bid you never in that name, (2)
Which ye assume, to teach ? Still ye persist,
And all Jerusalem is made to ring
With your exciting doctrine ; sworn, ’twould seem,
To make that man’s blood fall upon our nation.”

Sternly did Peter and the apostles hear
The High Priest’s language, and thus made reply :

(1) They would have done it, if the apostles had called upon them for defence. But Peter and John would not excite the people against the public authority, although unjust.

(2) They did not mention Christ. Was it through disrespect, or—I know not what—secret terror which it awakened, or their remorse ! They said : Do not preach in this name, because it injures us. Beautiful reasoning ! Not because there was not sufficient evidence of the truths announced through *x*. They once called down his blood upon their nation : they now fear it, and soon will feel the consequences.

"Not men, but God's high will must we obey."
 Thus all exclaimed ; but Peter, towering forth
 Pre-eminent above his peers, and fired
 With inspiration, glowing in his breast,
 Proceeded : "Jesus, whom ye doomed to die,
 Fixed to the cross, hath triumphed over death,
 Raised by our fathers' God to life again :
 Our Prince and Saviour He, whom, by his power,
 The Eternal hath exalted ; and through Him
 Repentance and remission are bestowed (1)
 Of past iniquities on Israel.
 These are the glorious things of which we yield
 Due testimony, with the Holy Ghost,
 Whom to his faithful servants God hath given." (2)

This fearless language, and these truths sublime,
 With preter-natural energy expressed
 By Peter, and enforced, roused up the wrath,
 Inflamed the vengeful passions, of the chiefs,
 And cut them to the heart : death they resolved
 Forthwith to inflict, and thereby seal their lips
 In silence everlasting ; when that God
 Who ever on their sacred destinies,
 With providential watchfulness, looked down,

(1) No one can repent except by his grace ; and the remission of sins, which is the consequence, can be obtained only through his merits.

(2) The testimony of the apostles, and that of the Holy Ghost, are considered as two distinct testimonies ; because the apostles had seen Jesus Christ resuscitated, and the Holy Ghost attested, by the miracles he wrought through them, the truth of their testimony

Chose from the ranks of their worst enemies,
 A vindicator of their cause and persons.
 This was a Pharisee, Gamaliel named, (1)
 A doctor of the law renowned and wise,
 Known to the people, and by all esteemed.
 He, while the council sat in fierce debate,
 Requested that the prisoners, for a time,
 Should be commanded to withdraw: 'twas done.
 When thus ingenuously he began :
 "Beware, O Israelites, how ye proceed
 Against these men ; with solemn caution act.
 For, ye remember, how, some time ago,
 Appeared a certain Theodas, (2) who claimed
 Extraordinary power, and professed
 To be a mighty personage, round whom
 Rallied, as followers, four hundred men.
 But he was slain ; and all his partisans

(1) It is not said that he was imbued with their false doctrines, or guilty of their vices ; but he held their belief with regard to the resurrection : whence he was considered a Pharisee. Such, also, was Nicodemus, and some others, who were not infected with the leaven of the sect. Was Gamaliel a secret disciple of Christ, or did he then open his eyes to the truth ? Of this we are doubtful, and his discourse does not inform us.

(2) Josephus speaks, in his third book of "Antiquities," of a certain Theodas, who gave himself out as a great prophet, against whom Caspius Fadus, then governor of Judea, sent an army, who slew him, with many of his partisans. This happened in the fourth year of the reign of Claudius. This fact embarrasses commentators ; because this epoch is many years posterior to the discourse of Gamaliel. Nevertheless, it is certain that Gamaliel cited this fact under the present circumstances ; that he cited it to men as well informed as himself, who, instead of contradicting him, agreed with him : wherefore, it could not be called in doubt.

Were dissipated, and reduced to nothing.
 Judas, the Galilean, next appeared,
 About the epoch of the enrolment: (1) he
 Drew after him great numbers; but, at length,
 He also perished; his disciples, too,
 Were scattered. Harken, then, to my advice:
 Cease to pursue these men—let them alone;
 For if their work and counsel human be,
 Soon will it crumble of itself; but if
 From God it come, you never can destroy it.
 Pause, therefore, pause: for, mayhap, in your zeal,
 You may be found warring with God's designs."

Sage was this counsel; yet, not sage, in truth,
 Had there not been some probable conjecture
 That this great movement was the work of Heaven.
 The right to change Religion rests in God,
 And rests in God alone—its author He.
 Fain, then, should they have carefully inquired
 Whether or not it was His work: if not,
 Justice demanded—human and divine—

(1) This may be the enrolment which took place at the birth of Jesus Christ; or another, made eight or ten years later, when Archelaus ceased to reign in Judea. One of the motives of Augustus in ordaining this, was to impose a capitation tax on his subjects. As the Jews were daily looking for the Messiah, many of them would not submit to this exaction. Judas, of Galilee, was at their head, and was killed. A principle of sedition was, however, left in the public mind, especially among the Galileans, many of whom preferred to suffer death rather than pay the tribute to Cæsar. This was the occasion, at length, of the general revolt, which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the people.

That they who furthered it, should be, at once,
Checked in their rashness, and thus safe preserved
Religion and the State: the former touch,
And the foundations of the latter shake.
But if the finger of Omnipotence
Marked out the origin of this emprise,
Then, to oppose it, was to war with Heaven;
And the pretext of guarding, saving all,
Would be the cause of losing every thing.
Now, 'twas to this examen (what more just?)
Gamaliel bade the council turn their minds.
And this, by his wise eloquence, he gained.

But not unpunished went the apostles: no,
They must be scourged, their mission sealed with
blood.
And then, again, all reeking from their wounds,
Summoned to hear the council's last decree:
"Never, in any manner, preach the name,
Or doctrines, of their Master, Jesus Christ."

With joy the apostles left,—too honored they
Reproach to suffer in His blessed cause.
But did their zeal relent? or was their spirit
Chained by the tyranny of cruel men?
No; like a flame, which for a while may be
Repressed and stifled, then more fiercely burns,
And spreads more widely,—thus glowed forth their
zeal.
For every day, not only as before
Around the temple did they preach of Christ,

But in the public places—through the streets—
In private houses—every where, they taught,
And every where the gospel they announced.

But men—alas! how true!—are always men: (1)
And, as a garden, be it e'er so well
And highly cultured, needs some fostering hand,
Industrious and skilled to prune or plant,—
So in communities, how pure soe'er,
Deficiencies are found to be supplied,
Extremes, with timely care, to be retrenched.

Among those people who, thus far, possessed
One spirit and one heart,—that Christian band,
Of whom the soul was charity divine
And love fraternal,—there began to creep
Insidious divisions: that pure source,
From which their union flowed and harmony,
Became polluted, and the stream of peace,
Troubled by passion, changed its limpid course.

As, in those days, with rapid growth increased
The number of believers, there arose
Among the Greeks, against the Hebrew Jews, (2)
A general murmuring and loud complaint,

(1) Chap. vi.

(2) Greek Jews were those born in the region where the Greek language was spoken, as well as those born in Judea of Greek parents. The Hebrew Jews were the natives of Judea, who spoke, not the pure Hebrew tongue, but a medley of Hebrew and Chaldaic, which their fathers brought from their captivity in Babylon

Because their widows, in the daily act
 Of ministry, were passed neglected by :
 An equal right, for them, they justly claimed
 To a proportion of the common fund. (1)
 To whom, amid these feuds, did it belong
 Peace to restore in the distracted fold,
 And every breach of charity repair—
 To whom, but the apostles? They, straightway,—
 The watchful twelve, the guardians of the flock,—
 Convened in council all their brethren, whom
 With monitory words they thus addressed :
 “ ’Tis not becoming, nay, nor just, that we
 Should leave the ministry to which we’re called,
 The awful ministry of preaching forth
 The word of God, the doctrine of our Master, (2)
 To do the service of the table ; no, (3)
 Let others for this function be ordained.
 Wherefore, my brethren, cast your eyes around,
 And from your number, with due caution, choose

(1) Some interpreters are of opinion, that the cause of discontent grew out of the little consideration shown the Greek widows during the distribution of the funds. This explanation is not probable, however. These women were *neglected* in the ministration—that is, they did not receive any of the goods which were considered the property of all, no matter of what nation, who embraced Christianity. We see how early and fatal was this national prejudice.

(2) The administration of ecclesiastical property belongs to the bishops, as well as the ministry of the word. They may here learn what they ought to do through the agency of others, and what of themselves.

(3) Others should be appointed to distribute the necessities of life, food, raiment &c

Seven good men and irreproachable—
 Men filled with wisdom and the Holy Ghost—
 And charge them with 'this business : ' whilst we,
 Devoted to the ministry of the word,
 Will give ourselves continually to prayer."

To this, unanimous assent was given,
 By all the multitude ; and, having weighed
 The various virtues, merits, qualities,
 Of not a few, enlightened from above,
 They made their choice : Stephen, a man of faith,
 And animated with the Holy Ghost ; (1)
 Philip, Nicanor, Parmenas, Prochorus,

(1) Stephen is known all over the world. The most celebrated after him, was Philip, who baptized the Eunuch of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. He also converted, by his preaching and miracles, a great number of Samaritans, among whom was Simon Magus. He had four daughters, virgins and prophetesses. The name of Evangelist was given him, (chap. xxi.) which means only one who announced the gospel. The Church celebrates his festival on the 6th of June. The four others are venerated as saints. Nicholas is the only one whose name is not in the Roman martyrology ; which circumstance leaves unsettled the question which divided the ancients, whether or not he was the author of the sect of Nicolaites, of which mention is made in the second chapter of the Apocalypse. The epithet, *proselyte*, which is annexed to his name, shows that he was a gentile before his conversion to Judaism. As the seven have all Greek names, it would appear that, by their choice, every subject of complaint on the part of the Greeks was removed. Whatever some theologians may have thought, the imposition of hands, joined to prayer, effected a sacred ordination. This is the common sentiment adopted by the Church, who, in the ordination of deacons, prays to God that the candidates *may be made worthy of the rank and order to which Stephen, with his companions, seven in number, was raised by the choice of the apostles.*

Timon, and Nicholas, a proselyte
 Of Antioch—these were the favored seven :
 These were presented to the apostles, who,
 With fervent prayer, on them imposed their hands.
 Thus was there added to the growing Church
 Another sacred Order. Whilst the first
 For all the ministerial wants sufficed,
 It was not needed : with the increasing flock
 Increased those correspondent wants, for which
 Co-operators were required and chosen ;
 The service of the table gave these birth—
 Service, o'er which presided, heretofore,
 The apostles—of whose functions this the least :
 From this relieved, from other cares exempt,
 And seconded by new “ Evangelists,”
 Wider and wider did they spread the Word,
 Greater and greater conquests did they make
 Among the people of Jerusalem.
 Nor yet alone among the people ; priests,
 In wondrous numbers, yielded to the faith—
 Bowed down their reason, once so stern and proud,
 Before the glorious mystery of Truth.
 They had consented to the death of Christ ;
 Who, for his executioners, breathed forth,
 With his last sigh, on Golgotha, a prayer,
 Of which the efficacy now is felt. (1)
 They own their error, and they wail their crime—
 First in the Synagogue, least in the Church.

No human combination should be deemed--

(1) St. Chrysostom. *Hom. 14, in Acta Apostol*

Nor offspring of mere human policy—
 This new-formed order ; heavenly in its birth,
 Its institution sprang from God himself,
 And with a holy character was stamped.
 That in the public mind no doubt should lurk
 Regarding its true nature, with success,
 Bright and triumphant, was the preaching marked
 And signalized by Stephen, first of Deacons.
 With grace, and its attendant strength, replete, (1)
 Marvels he wrought, and signs unparalleled,
 Among the people : he conspicuous stood,
 Before the jealous eyes of these same men
 Who, failing, or by cruelty or bribe,
 To hush and vanquish the apostles, turned
 Towards him their weapons, with a force combined.
 A noble victim ! an immortal witness !
 Whose unquenched light still, after years of gloom
 And desolation, shines upon the Church.

Against the influence of this wondrous man,
 The synagogues of the three parts of earth—
 A memorable fact—arrayed their power :
 That of the " Libertines," (2) and that of the
 Alexandrians and Cyrenians,

(1) Replenished with *strength*, because he had been with *grace* : man, left to his own strength, is but weakness.

(2) *Libertinorum* ; meaning *freed-men*. These were Jews born at Rome, of parents who had been slaves, but were set at liberty. Augustus assigned them a quarter of the city, beyond the Tiber, where they might dwell and practise their religion :—perhaps the very quarter now allowed their descendants, in the same capital, by the liberality of the popes.

Those from Cilicia and Asia,—all (1)
 Leagued, in unanimous efforts of dispute,
 His doctrine to subvert, his cause to check.
 But idle was the assault ; for, by his mouth,
 The Spirit spake with wisdom so profound,
 They could not answer, nay, they stood amazed,
 Pale with confusion, and dared not resist. (2)

To other weapons, more effectual far
 Than those of argument, they had recourse :
 Weapons most fatal : for no ægis may
 Cover their victim from their poisoned shafts.
 Aim them at Innocence, and lo ! she bleeds :
 At Virtue, and she droops her lovely crest
 In agony intense. Religion's heart
 By them, full oft, hath been transfixed ; her HEAD
 Could not escape ;—meek victim to their rage.
 Such were the weapons Stephen must encounter :—
 Malignant slander, calumny perverse.

False witnesses were daringly suborned,
 Who, with perfidious hardihood, averred,
 That he had uttered words with blasphemy

(1) Asia Minor, now Natolia, a mere province of Asia, one of the quarters of the globe. He disputed against men from the three quarters ; against those from Asia, against the Cyrenians and Alexandrians from Africa, and the Libertines of Rome, from Europe. Others have to dispute with the fourth quarter.

(2) We here behold the accomplishment of the promise which Jesus Christ made to his disciples, that it would not be they that should speak, but the Holy Ghost, who should speak through their mouths, (Matt. x. 20,) and that he would give them wisdom, which their enemies could not resist or contradict. (Luke xxi. 15.)

'Gainst Moses, and the God of Moses, fraught. (1)
 The breasts of all took fire : Ancients, and Scribes,
 And people, rising with impetuous zeal,
 Seized upon Stephen, and a prisoner dragged
 That glorious Levite to the council, where
 The charge calumnious was urged anew :
 " 'This man,"—the base traducers thus deposed—
 " Incessant speaks against the Holy Place,
 And Israel's law assails : with our own ears,
 And more than once, we heard the menace drop
 From his unhallowed lips, that time should be,
 When Jesus—he of Nazareth—would destroy
 The consecrated temple, and lay low
 In dust the glory of Jerusalem. (2)

(1). If he had blasphemed against Moses, he would have blasphemed against God, the author of the mission of Moses. But this was a manifest calumny ; for there can be no doubt that he spoke of Moses according to the principles of Christianity. Now, any Christian, who knows his religion, far from speaking against Moses, regards him as the greatest man, and, perhaps, the greatest saint, of the ancient testament.

(2) Jesus was called, the *Man of Nazareth*, in derision, in order to render him contemptible to the Jewish people.

These false witnesses brought against Stephen, not his own words, but the sense which they gave them, and the consequences they drew from them. In this respect, they were false witnesses. In order to be true witnesses, they should have reported his own terms, and an equitable judge would have examined their natural and literal meaning. The holy Levite might have said, that the new law which he announced was the perfection, but not the destruction, of the ancient law : he might have declared that Jesus Christ had predicted the destruction of the temple and city, but not that Christ himself would be the destroyer of them. Time proved that He who made this terrible prediction was Divine. All the circumstances were so minutely specified—the abomination

That then our worship should be done away—
The worship of our fathers—and the old
Traditions of our nation should be charged.”

Amid these charges, gentle and serene,
Smiled, in his innocence, the holy man,
Before the council. By this evidence
Emboldened, not convinced of Stephen's guilt—
For 'twas a mere pretext to blind the crowd—
The ancients rose, their sentence to pronounce
On the blasphemer, when behold! his face
Like a sweet angel's face to them appeared!
A halo shone around his placid brow;
And thus transfigured, silently he stood.
Spell-bound, at first, and powerless to speak,
The council eyed the marvel; when, at length,
The High Priest broke the silence that ensued—
A breathless, fearful silence—in these words:
“The charge of blasphemy, by numerous men
Alleged against thee, Stephen, thou hast heard:
Art thou, then, guilty? Is it so? Explain;
Make thy defence; for we will hear thy voice.”

Then, like an inmate of the heavenly world (1)

2: desolation in the Holy Place—the ploughshare of destruction that passed through the streets—the famine, pestilence, and ruin, that ensued—the dispersion of the Jews, and the cessation of their sacrifice—all conspire to prove that Jesus was the Messiah; that the religion he instituted was the completion and perfection of the ancient law; and that he was, indeed, the Son of God, as the Centurion exclaimed, when Jesus expired on the cross of Calvary.

(1) Chap. vii.

Arrayed in glory, beamed upon their view
 The holy Levite, while he thus began :
 " Brethren, and venerable fathers, hear :
 Ere yet our father Abraham had left
 Mesopotamia's land, to dwell in Charan, (1)
 To him the God of majesty appeared,
 And said : *Forth from thy native country go,*
And from thy kindred, to a distant land,
Which I will shew thee. From Chaldea, then,
 Bidding farewell to all the heart most loves,
 Obedient he departed, and abode
 In Charan : whence, after his father slept,
 God bade him pass into this very land,
 Wherein ye now are dwelling : not a foot
 Of ground was given, no inheritance,
 To him, at first ; but God the promise made
 That he should have possession, and his seed
 Who were to come, though yet he had no child. (2)

(1) Now Diarben, or Diarbekir, a region situated between the Tigris and the Euphrates. It is said, in Genesis, that Abraham was then at Ur, in Chaldea, a province bordering on Mesopotamia, properly so called. But as there are authors who give a greater extent to Mesopotamia, and others to Chaldea, Moses could have said, in the sense of the second, that Abraham was then in Chaldea ; and, according to the first, St. Stephen could say that he was in Mesopotamia. We find some other apparent discrepancies between the account given by Stephen, and that of Moses, but they are not more embarrassing than this one.

(2) Abraham has well deserved to be styled the Father of believers, and nothing is more just than the expression of St. Paul : *He hoped against hope*, (Rom. iv.) For he believed he would have a son by Sarah, when by age they were both placed beyond the condition of having children. He believed that the country in which he was not to possess a foot of ground, would become the





Beherra at the well.

God then declared : *That his seed should sojourn
In a strange country, that they should be brought
Under the yoke of bondage, and be doomed
To suffer misery, four hundred years. (1)
And I will judge the nation, said the Lord,
Which they shall serve : and when these things shall
cease,
They shall go out, and serve me in this place.*

“The covenant of circumcision, then,
Was given to Abraham, and he begot
Isaac ; whom, eight days old, he circumcised.
Jacob was born of Isaac, and from him,
As from their stock, sprang the twelve patriarchs.
Those, urged by jealousy, their brother sold—
The gentle Joseph—who was carried off
To Egypt ; but the Lord was with him there,

inheritance of his children ; and obliged to believe that his posterity would obtain it, he was nevertheless obliged to believe that they would be slaves and wanderers during four centuries. Man is so much under the dominion of the senses, that nothing appears more incredible than that which has against it every sensible appearance : and we may say, in this particular, that what Abraham believed was more difficult to be believed than the Trinity. Zachary, who did not doubt the mystery of the Incarnation, doubted, in the first instance, that of himself and his wife, both so far advanced in years, a child could be born.

(1) St. Stephen numbers four hundred years. Moses (Exodus, xii. 40) and St. Paul (Galat. iii. 17) four hundred and thirty. The latter compute from the departure of Abraham into Egypt, when famine obliged him to go and seek for the means of subsistence out of the land of Canaan : the former from the birth of Isaac, with whom commences the posterity of Abraham, which was the object of the prophecy.

And rescued him from all his tribulations.
 Endowed with wisdom from on high, he found
 In Pharaoh's presence, favor—Egypt's king—
 Who placed him ruler over all the realm,
 And over all his house. Now, through the land
 Of Egypt, and the land of Canaan,
 A wasting famine came: misery wide
 Extended; tribulation swept abroad;
 And our forefathers were deprived of food.
 When Jacob heard that still much corn was left
 In Egypt, thither he deputed first
 Our fathers: and again, a second time;
 When Joseph knew his brethren, and revealed
 Affectionate, his kindred to the king.
 And sending for his father, thither went
 Jacob and all his kin, in number five
 And seventy; (1) who died in that strange land,
 He and our fathers: whence they were removed (2)
 To Sichem, and were buried in the tomb

(1) Moses mentions seventy, including in the number Jacob, Joseph, and those of his children who were born in Egypt. The Septuagint agrees with St. Stephen, without counting Jacob, Joseph, and his children: but it is more than probable that they included the wives of the patriarchs, who passed into Egypt with their husbands. Following this mode of computation, the numbers are exact, and no contradiction exists.

(2) They carried them—not Jacob himself, who was buried in the double cavern which Abraham had purchased, with the adjoining field, from Ephron Hiteen, to be used as his sepulchre (Gen. i.) In the Old Testament, mention only is made of the translation of the bones of Joseph; nevertheless, it is certain that the remains of all his brethren were carried away and laid in the tomb at Sichem. This St. Stephen affirms too unequivocally, to admit of any doubt. The tradition is general among the Jews; and St.



Joseph before Pharaoh.

PLATE XLII.

Which, for a sum of money, Abraham bought
Of Hemor's sons, who was the son of Sichem. (1)

“And when the time ordained by God drew near,
For the fulfilment of his promise made,
With solemn pledge, to Abraham, then began
To multiply the people, and increase,
In Egypt, till another king arose,
Who knew not Joseph; he, with crafty power,
Our race afflicted, and oppressed our fathers,
Compelling them their infants to expose,
That they might perish, thus, and be destroyed.

“At this sad juncture, mid these fatal woes, (2)

Jerome declares, that he saw at Sichem the tombs of the twelve patriarchs, which were still shown in his time.

(1) It was not at Sichem, but near Hebron, and opposite Mambre, that Abraham bought the sepulchre in which he was interred, and also Isaac and Jacob, as we have seen. Yet, we do not read in Genesis, that Abraham purchased a field at Sichem: but that he purchased a part of the field of the children of Hemor, the father of Sichem, and there raised an altar; (Gen. xxiii.) that he passed by Sichem, and raised another there, (Gen. xii.-xiii.) Now, we have only to suppose that Abraham had bought, as Jacob did, the place where he erected the altar at Sichem, and St. Stephen will not be opposed to Moses. If it is objected that it is not probable that Abraham bought all the places on which he raised altars, we answer, that what he might not have ordinarily done, he might have done once. And if there were circumstances when Abraham might erect an altar in a field without being obliged to purchase it, there might have been others when the proprietor would not have suffered it.

The truth of the Scripture, taken in its totality, is entirely independent of these little difficulties, whether they can be immediately resolved or not.

(2) Here properly commences the apology of St. Stephen. As

Moses was born—acceptable to God.
 Three months beheld him in his father's house,
 Where he was nourished ; afterward, exposed,
 By Pharaoh's daughter he was snatched from death,
 As her own son adopted, and was taught
 The wisdom of the Egyptians ; and he grew
 Mighty in words, and marvellous in deeds. (1)

“ Now, when twice twenty years had passed away,
 The thought came in his heart—auspicious thought—

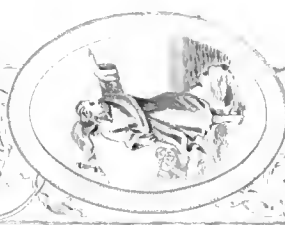
yet he had answered nothing of which he had been accused. Why, then, this long preamble ? We do not see the reason clearly, and what is now added is mere conjecture. They who spoke of religion in the assembly of the Jews, began by briefly referring to the origin of their history—as the vocation of Abraham, the rescue from Egypt, the conquest of Chanaan, &c. This method might have had its utility, which it is not necessary here to explain. This was their ordinary exordium, which they brought down to the particular point they intended to treat. This, I repeat, is but a conjecture, and it rests on the method followed by St. Paul. (See chap. xiii. of the Acts.) He had to prove to the Jews of Antioch that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah. The proof begins only when he speaks of David, to whom God had promised that the Messiah was to be born of his blood. Nevertheless, he starts from the origin of the Hebrew people, and runs over their history, from their departure out of Egypt to the choice which God made of David, as successor of Saul.

(1) We will see lower down, (verse 35,) that St. Stephen reproaches them with having slighted the mission of Moses on this occasion. God must, consequently, have attested it by some miraculous sign, which obliged them to recognise it. We do not read, however, that Moses had performed any miracle as yet : but is it not understood in the words *powerful in word and deeds*?—the very expression which St. Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, uses to express in Jesus Christ, the power of working miracles. (Luke xxiv. 19.)



The Finding of Moses.

Exo. 2.







Pages in the Land of Midian.

To go and see the sons of Israel,
 His brethren, held in bondage, and oppress.
 Of these, when any one he chanced to know
 Unjustly treated, him, with noble pride,
 Did he defend, and vindicate his wrongs,
 By felling the Egyptian to the earth. (1)
 He deemed his brethren now had understood
 That God had chosen him to break their chains,
 And free them; but they understood it not.
 Upon the morrow, when they were at strife,
 He stood among them, and effected peace,
 And reconciliation: 'Men,' he cried,
 'Forget not ye are brethren; why not, then,
 Agree among yourselves?' But little recked
 The aggressor his peace-offering; with disdain
 Repulsing Moses, '*Who,*' he sternly said,
 '*Hath constituted thee our prince and judge?*
Wilt thou kill me, as yesterday thou didst
Lay the Egyptian prostrate?' Moses fled,
 And in the land of Madian abode,
 A stranger, and two sons he there begat.

"Years passed, meanwhile: a period expired
 Of forty summers, when, beneath a bush
 Flaming with fire, amid the desert vast

(1) He did this legitimately; for he did it by Divine inspiration, as St. Augustine thinks. We find in the ancient testament some inspirations of this kind; and it would be impiety to deny them or censure them. The evangelical law does not permit similar deeds. Ours is not the law of retaliation, much less of persecution; but of peace, meekness, patience, forbearance, and love. *Beati pacifici.*

Of Sinai's mount, the angel of the Lord (1)
 Came down before him: at the marvellous sight,
 His bosom throbb'd with wonder; and, as nigh,
 More closely to consider it, he drew,
 The voice of God fell on his startled ear:
*The God of all thy ancestors am I:
 Of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob!*
 With terror fill'd, Moses durst not behold.
Take off thy sandals from thy feet, the Lord
 Again address'd him, trembling; *for the place*
Whercon thou standest now, is holy ground.
The affliction of my people I have seen,
Their groaning in captivity have heard,
And am come down to free them. I will send
Thee into Egypt, their deliverer. (2)
 This Moses they reject'd, with these words:
Who hath appointed thee our prince and judge?

(1) He who is here called the *angel of the Lord*, is, in another verse, styled *the Lord*. This has given rise to two opinions, which have divided theologians. Some have thought, that he who spoke to Moses was the Son of God, who is called by Isaiah the *angel* of great wisdom. Others are of opinion, that it was literally an angel, who is called Lord, because he represented the Lord, and spoke in his name. The second is the more general opinion. *God*, says St. Paul, *who, in sundry times and in divers manners spoke, in times past, to the fathers, last of all, in these days, hath spoken to us by his Son.* (Heb. i. 1.) From which it would appear, that it was the exclusive privilege of the evangelical law to have been announced by the Son in person.

(2) God, by his immensity, is every where present. He can, therefore, neither descend nor ascend, nor, in any way, pass from one place to another. Hence, when it is said in Scripture, *I have descended*, or, *I will ascend*, it means that he will make his presence visible on earth.

Him God sent forth in quality of Prince,
 And Saviour, by the angel's flaming hand,
 Who did speak with him from the burning bush.
 He brought them out with wonders and dread signs,
 Wrought in the land of Egypt, the Red Sea,
 And in the desert, during forty years.
 This is the self-same Moses, who declared
 To Israel's children : *God shall, one day, raise*
To you of your own brethren, as myself,
A prophet ; him shall you receive and hear. (1)
 This is the same who, in the Church, amid
 The wilderness, was with the angel bright,
 Conversing with him upon Sinai's brow
 And with our wondering fathers ; and received
 The words of life, to be conveyed to us. (2)
 Our fathers disobeyed him, and their hearts
 Yearned back for Egypt ; and they said to Aaron :

(1) In reporting the interview of God with Moses, St. Stephen said enough to give his accusers to understand that he was not opposed to Moses, since he admitted the divinity of his mission. Nevertheless, it might have been objected that, to substitute another legislator in his place, was equivalent to destroying his legislation. This objection he answers, or rather, he anticipates it, by mentioning the prophecy of Moses, who announced another legislator, to whom God required the people to be obedient, under pain of incurring his vengeance. It was not, then, speaking against Moses to announce, in his own words, a new legislator, to reject whom would be to make Moses a false prophet.

(2) *Words of life* ; that is to say, the law of God, which gave life to all who observed it. Some understand temporal, some eternal, life. We must only remark, that the ancient law procured directly, and of itself, only temporal prosperity ; and that eternal happiness, to which they who observed it attained, could be merited only by the grace of Jesus Christ.

*Make gods to lead us on ;—we know not what
 Hath chanced to this man Moses, who hath led
 Our nation out of Egypt—he is lost ;
 What hath become of him we cannot tell.*
 A golden calf, accordingly, they made,
 And to that idol offered sacrifice ;
 Rejoicing in the work of their own hands.
 And God turned from them his propitious care,
 And gave them up to serve the host of Heaven ; (1)
 As it is written in the prophet's book :
*O house of Israel ! was it to me
 That thou didst offer victims, forty years,
 And sacrifices, in the desert ? No ; (2)
 The tent of Moloch to yourselves you took, (3)*

(1) The stars and planets, which were among the first objects of idolatry. Afterwards, people decreed divine honors to men of extraordinary character, who had signalized themselves by great actions, or benefits conferred on their race. These two kinds of worship seem to have been united by attributing the names of these men to the stars and planets, which were, and are still, called Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, &c.

(2) They offered sacrifices to God in the desert, when the Eternal gave the law, when Aaron was consecrated with his children, and when the tabernacle was dedicated. The sacred Scriptures do not make mention of any others. This fact, joined to what has been said, induces the belief, that the sacrifices that were instituted then were not to be carried into effect until the Israelites should be established in the land of promise.

(3) If we can believe the ancient monuments, cited by able critics, Moloch was the god Mars, and Rempham, Saturn. Rempham is mentioned but this one time in the holy writings. Moloch occurs in many places, and is called the god of the Ammonites. It was in honor of this divinity, who delighted in human blood, that parents consigned to the flames their little children. With this barbarous practice the Almighty often reproaches the Israel-

*And the bright star of Rempham, figures which
You made to adore, idolatrous ;—and now
Will I transport you far from Babylon.”*

Thus far was Moses proudly recognised
By Stephen, charged with blasphemy against him :
More glorious testimony ne’er was given,
In language so magnificently plain.
Next of the holy temple he discoursed,
To which he paid high homage ; since he owned
In terms equivalent, that David formed,
By inspiration, the superb design,
Which Solomon achieved : yet must he show—
And showing, disabuse the Israelites
Of their erroneous doctrine and conceit—
That to their temple—built by human hands—
Worship was not essentially confined.
And thus the Levite his discourse pursued.

“ The testimonial tabernacle, traced (1)
By God’s own finger, in the wilderness
Our fathers had, which Moses was required
To fashion after the celestial form
Which he had witnessed ; this our fathers all

des, who, from their long sojourn in Egypt, became the servile imitators of their inhuman persecutors, and did not scruple to imbrue their hands in these unnatural sacrifices.

(1) The tabernacle of the testimony, or of the declaration of the Divine will ; which, perhaps, includes, and has reference to, the tables of the law, principally ; according to the following words, spoken by the Almighty to Moses *The ark in which thou shalt place the testimony I will give unto thee.* (Exod. xxv. 21.)

Received, and bore, with Joshua at their head,
 Into the land of Gentiles, whom the Lord
 Scattered before them. Down to David's days
 The tabernacle lasted ; who found grace
 Before the Lord, and longed a spot to find
 Whereon a tabernacle to erect
 Worthy the God of Jacob. This design
 By Solomon was executed : he—
 Munificently wise—the temple reared.
 But not in houses built by mortal hands
 His dwelling makes the Eternal : *The high heaven,*
As sang, of yore, his prophet, is my throne,
The universe my footstool : what house, then,
Can ye build for me ? or where can ye find
A place for my repose ? Are not all things
The world contains created by my hands ?”

Thus calmly downward in his narrative
 Glided the speech of Stephen. On the crowd
 Of eager listeners slight effect was wrought :
 Hardened they seemed, and desperately stern.
 He read their hearts ; when, bursting from his mood
 Of quiet reasoning, with a tone sublime,
 Of zeal indignant, thus he fulminated forth
 Reproaches terrible : “ Ye Jews in name,
 But stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart
 And ears ! the holy Spirit ye resist,
 As did your fathers, alway, so do ye.
 By them which of the prophets hath not been
 With persecution visited ? and they
 Who, of the coming of the Just One told,



Death at Midnight



Were slain : He hath appeared upon the earth ;
Ye His betrayers and His murderers are.
And ye to whom, by angel-hands, was given
The law, have trampled it beneath your feet." (1)

He ceased : but deep into their very hearts
His language cut : they gnashed, with rage, their
teeth.

Amid their fury, his meek eyes were raised
Steadfast upon the heavens ; where he saw
The glory of the Lord, at whose right hand
Stood Jesus : heeding not their threats, he cried :
"I see the heavens open on my view—
On God's right hand the Son of Man I see!"

Forthwith, as if convicted now, at length,
Of blasphemy most foul, they shrieked aloud
Confusedly, and stopped their ears, as though
Insufferably shocked, and driven by rage
Impetuous, on him fell with one accord ;
And dragging him without the city-walls,

(1) The fire that glows in these words does not exclude from them a very strong and urgent argument against the Jews. It is this : your fathers have always resisted those who spoke to them on the part of God. You resemble them in this particular. You must believe him ; or, at least, fear him. Do not permit yourselves to be carried away by a precipitate ardor, which, under the appearance of zeal, might be a headstrong resistance to the Divine will. His discourse tended to the same point as that of Gamaliel, but in a different direction. Gamaliel repressed their fury in part : Stephen, more vehement and impassioned, excited all the venom and hatred which were festering in their impenitent hearts.

Beneath a shower of stones they crushed the holy
man. (1)

The executioners their garments laid—
That he might guard them—at the feet of SAUL,
A young and ardent zealot in their cause.
Tottering beneath a volley of dense stones,
And weltering in his blood, the Levite prayed:
“Lord Jesus, whom I see, receive my soul!”
Then, reeling on his knees, with a loud voice,
To Heaven for mercy on the Jews he cried. (2)
“O Lord, lay not this murder to their charge!”
Breathing forgiveness with his last deep sigh,

(1) St. Stephen saw, with his bodily eyes, the humanity of the Saviour—God, by a miracle, having rendered it visible. It is difficult to determine what he saw, and what is here styled the *glory of God*. One thing is certain, that he did not behold the Divine Essence in itself, since St. John declared afterwards, *that no man had seen God*. (John i. 18.)

In many parts of the Scripture it is said, that Jesus is *seated* at the right hand of God. This signifies his equality with the Father—the eternal repose that has succeeded to His labors in this life. In this instance He appears to Stephen, standing, in order to support His champion, and to crown him.

The law ordained that the blasphemer should be stoned, and that his accusers should throw the first stones. (Deuter. xvii. 7.) They laid aside their garments, in order to be more free.

Stephen was stoned before any judgment had been pronounced. The fury of the mob broke through all law: and this was one of the many cases in which the Roman magistrates could not check or prevent the tumultuous outbreaks of the Jewish populace.

(2) Jesus addressed the same prayer of pardon and pity for his crucifiers, to his eternal Father, just before he expired on Calvary. What a striking difference is here presented between false zeal, which produces stubbornness and cruelty, and true zeal, which is founded on charity! The first massacres; the second invokes forgiveness on the murderer. Zeal is the most noble of all vir-

Calmly he slept and sweetly in the Lord.
Covered with wounds, the martyr's body lay
Stretched on the sward. But round the relic pressed
Men fearing God, who, with religious care,
Removed the body, and, with funeral pomp,
And mourning deep, consigned it to the tomb. (3)

tues, and, at the same time, the most exposed to illusion: as the most precious metals are the most liable to be subject to alloy or to imitation.

(1) By this *great mourning* is meant, not only grief and tears, and other expressions of regret, but it likewise implies the funeral honors that were paid to the remains of the venerable Levite.

BOOK SECOND.⁽¹⁾

CONTENTS:

Persecution of the faithful—Conversion of the Samaritans—Simon the Magician—The Eunuch baptized—Conversion of Saul—Peter cures at Lydda Æneas the paralytic, and resuscitates Tabitha at Juppe—Apparition of an Angel to Cornelius the Centurion—Vision of St. Peter—Cornelius instructed and baptized, with his family—Peter gives the reasons for his conduct—Preaching of Barnabas and of Saul at Antioch, where the faithful take the name of Christians—Herod puts to death James, the brother of John—Peter delivered out of prison by an Angel—Death of Herod—The Holy Ghost ordains that Barnabas and Saul should be chosen to preach to the Gentiles—The Magician, Bar-Jesu, struck blind at the words of Paul—Conversion of Sergius Paulus—Discourse of Paul in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia—Blasphemy of the Jews—Persecution excited by them—Conversion of the Gentiles.

SAUL to the death of Stephen gave consent: (2)
Nay more, by taking to his special care
The garments of the murderers, he must be
Reputed an accomplice in their deed
Of cruelty and sin. Upon the stage—
Destined a place so glorious to hold—
For the first time appears this "Jew of Jews."
Descended from the tribe of Benjamin; (3)

(1) From the ninth to the thirteenth chapter, inclusively

(2) Chap. viii.

(3) *Of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to the law, a Pharisee; according to zeal, persecuting the Church; according to the justice that is in the law, conversing without blame.* (Philipp. iii. 5, 6.)

And I made progress in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more abundantly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. (Galat. i. 14.)

According to the law, a Pharisee ;
In zeal, a persecutor of the Church ;
In outward justice, irreproachable ;
Excelling his coevals of his race,
In Jewish lore, and scrupulous regard
For the traditions of his ancestors.

A speaking portrait, traced by his own hands ;
Wherein the germ of all his virtuous deeds,
And all his rashest, too, the source is found.
Great probity, with innate ardor joined,
Must, or a furious persecutor make
Or an apostle, of the truth—as known.
One and the other, in a high degree,
Was Saul of Tarsus—but the former first.

Now, in Jerusalem, against the Church
A general persecution raged : the Jews,
Emboldened by success, through all restraint
Burst, in their vengeance ; all her ministers,
Save the apostles, were dispersed abroad
Through Samaria and Judea. Saul
Havocked the mourning Church ; from house to
house,
Maddened with zeal, he ran, dragging away
Both men and women, who were doomed to pine
In prisons, whence they ne'er emerged again,
Unless apostates by constraint—or else
To be encircled with the martyr's wreath.
Men's malice oft subserves the work of Heaven :
Christ's ministers dispersed throughout the land,

Roaming from place to place, the word of God
Announced : of these, the first—since Stephen's
death—

And chief of Levites, Philip stood confest :
The void he filled—the vacancy supplied—
With zeal intense, and signal gifts bestowed
By Providence, still watching o'er his Church. (1)

Philip went down to Samaria, where (2)
He preached Christ to the people, who received
Attentive what he taught them ; and he did
Astounding miracles, driving from some
The unclean spirits, which, at his command,

(1) It was stated above that the apostles did not fly. The Church required their presence : and though Christ had told them, when persecuted, to flee from city to city, he had likewise reminded them that a good shepherd must expose his life for his flock. Up to this period the Church was confined to Jerusalem ; where they continued for some years, as in the cradle and centre of religion.

(2) Samaria was the name of a country and a town, the capital of the country. It was built by Amri, king of Israel, destroyed by Hircanus, and rebuilt by Herod the Great, who, in compliment to the Emperor Augustus, gave it the name of Sebaste, which is a Greek word synonymous with Augustus.

When Jesus Christ sent his apostles upon their first mission, he forbade them to enter the towns of the Samaritans. (Matt. x. 5.) He made an exception, in his own person, when, at the entreaty of Sichar, he tarried with them two days. (John iv.) The prohibition was removed when, after his resurrection, he declared that they should be witnesses of him in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and the furthestmost parts of the earth. This last clause did not then express, with precision, the vocation of the Gentiles, but referred to the Jews scattered over the world. The admirable vision of Peter, which will hereafter be described, was the first unequivocal demonstration of the designs of God in this particular.

Departed from their victims, with loud shrieks.
 Numbers of palsied men and lame were cured,
 And gladness through the wondering city spread.

A certain man, whose name was Simon, dwelt
 At Samaria: he, by magic art,
 Seduced the people, who reputed him
 A mighty personage; upon his lips
 All hung enrapt, the greatest and the least.
 "He is," they flattering cried, "the power of God,
 Which is called great." For, by his magic deeds,
 He had bewitched them. But that witchery
 Melted away before the burning words
 Of Philip, who, with eloquence divine,
 Proclaimed God's kingdom: in the name of Christ,
 Many, both men and women, were baptized:
 Simon himself among them; who believed,
 And clung to Philip; for he saw, amazed,
 The unprecedented marvels which were wrought. (1)

These joyous tidings reached Jerusalem,
 And solaced the apostles; who, straightway,
 Deputed Peter to the new-baptized
 And John; these, coming, joined in fervent prayer,

(1) Many of the holy fathers, judging from the promptitude with which Simon received baptism, were of opinion that he feigned to believe: but the text simply says, "he believed." The miracles performed by Philip might have been sufficient to enforce conviction: but the desire to be able to exercise an equal power, seems to have been his only motive in embracing the truth; and thus may it be said, that he believed and did not believe.

That they the Holy Spirit might receive : (1)
 For he, as yet, had not come down upon
 The neophytes, who, in the name of Christ,
 Had been regenerated : they imposed
 Their hands, and all received the Holy Ghost. (2)

When Simon saw the apostles lay their hands,
 And thus confer the Spirit, he would fain
 With gold have purchased that rare privilege : (3)
 "Sell me," he said,—“behold the price—this power
 That whomsoever my hands rest upon,

(1) This was *not* an act of authority on the part of the apostles, but the result of common deliberation. They *sent*, signifies, that they judged proper that Peter and John should go to Samaria.

(2) They had received, in baptism, the spirit of sanctification, but not of strength, or the other gifts that accompanied confirmation : for, in this imposition of hands, all antiquity has recognised the sacrament of Confirmation. Nothing is said of holy unction, concerning which theologians differ. Some affirm, that the apostles made use of it. Others think that, by a special privilege, they dispensed with it. In either case, the anointing with chrism has ever since been regarded as necessary—as theologians term it, *necessitate sacramenti*.

Baptism makes the Christian : confirmation perfects him. The eagerness with which the apostles administered it to the neophytes, shows its importance. To neglect to receive this sacrament is sinful : what is the sin of those who, charged with the administration of it, leave the faithful deprived of so great a gift !

(3) All the world knows, that from this sacrilegious offer, the traffic of sacred things has taken the name of Simony. Simon was the first of heresiarchs ; and the most part of the heresies of the first three centuries flowed from him. Every heretic then merely added his own notions to a mixture of Christianity and Platonism. Peter announces the chastisement which he deserved, which might have been averted by timely and sincere repentance.

On him the Spirit shall descend." To whom
 Thus Peter: "With thee let thy money perish!
 With gold the gift of God may not be bought.
 In our high ministry nor part hast thou
 Nor lot; for in His sight, who knows all things,
 Thy heart is wicked: wherefore, for thy guilt
 Do penance; and, in humble prayer, beseech
 The Omnipotent forgiveness to vouchsafe.
 Perhaps he still may pardon thee—perhaps!
 For in the gall of bitterness art thou (1)
 Bound in the shackles of iniquity."

These words struck terror into Simon's heart,
 Shuddering, but not converted: "Pray," he cried.
 "Pray ye to God, that from my guilty head
 He may avert the evils ye announce,
 And spare me, spare me, from His menaced
 wrath." (2)

The duties of their ministry fulfilled—
 Their testimony given—the gospel preached—
 Back to Jerusalem they bent their way,
 Proclaiming, as they went, the word of God.

The merciful designs of Heaven appeared,

(1) *Perhaps*; for the dispositions of the heart are always uncertain: if they are certainly good, pardon will assuredly be obtained for sin, no matter how enormous. But Simon's heart was *in the gall of bitterness*; that is to say, poisoned with malice.

(2) The prayers of just men avail much, whether on earth or in heaven; but we must not neglect to pray on our part. If we trust entirely to the prayers of others, and neglect to offer our own, they will be of no benefit to us.

By gradual development, displayed ;
 For, in the person of a single man,
 Another nation to the faith was called :
 Of this the instrument whom God ordained
 Was Philip. Lo ! a vision breaks upon
 His lonely meditations ; and a voice—
 An angel's voice—commands him to arise :
 " Go towards the south, and towards the way tha.
 leads
 Down into Gaza from Jerusalem— (1)
 Desert and unfrequented." He departs.
 And, journeying on remotely, he beheld
 A chariot passing ; in which sat a man
 From Æthiopia, a Eunuch high (2)
 Of Candace, the queen ; one who had charge
 Of Æthiopia's treasures, and had come

(1) Gaza had been anciently a city of the Philistines, the gates of which were carried off by Sampson, and in which he caused many thousands to perish. Alexander the Great took it after a siege of two months, and laid it in ruins. In the neighborhood, a new town was built, to which the same name was given. Of the first mention is here made ; and hence the epithet *deserted*, which is applied to it.

(2) Eunuch, in its origin, signifies simply an officer of the palace. Candace was queen of that part of Africa now called Abyssinia. Of this region the Eunuch was the first apostle ; and the words of the Psalmist were accomplished : *Æthiopia shall be the first to raise her hands towards God.* (Ps. lxxvii. 32.) If he was not by origin a Jew, he must have been, at least, a proselyte, since he came to adore in the temple, and was engaged in reading the holy Scriptures. Because he practised what he knew, God bestowed on him a knowledge of the gospel ; and in his person was realized the declaration of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, (i. 17,)—*The justice of God is revealed from faith unto faith.*

To adore, with others, in Jerusalem,
 And homeward was returning. He appeared—
 Reclining in his chariot—absorbed
 Reading Isaiah. “Haste,” the Spirit said,
 “Draw near the chariot.” Philip obeyed;
 And, running, heard the Eunuch reading loud
 The prophecies, and thus accosted him:
 “What thou art reading dost thou understand?”
Unless some one explain it, he returned, (1)
How can I understand? And he desired
 The stranger to come up and sit with him.
 The words of Scripture which he read were these:
Even as a sheep to slaughter he was led;
And as a lamb before his shearers stands
Without a voice, he opened not his mouth.
In his abasement, judgment was removed.
His generation no one shall declare,
Because his life is taken from the earth. (2)
 “Of whom, I pray thee, doth the prophet speak—
 Or of himself, or of some other man?”

(1) A good Protestant would have given a very different answer. For it is a fundamental principle with him, that any individual can understand the Scriptures, and interpret them, *without note or comment!* The Eunuch felt his deficiency, and acknowledged the necessity of having some one to show him the true meaning of the obscure passage upon which he happened to be meditating on his way. Let us avow our incapacity to understand the sacred writings. Are we wiser than St. Augustine? And yet that most learned and venerable doctor of the Church did not hesitate to affirm, *that in the Bible there was more that he did not know, than that he knew.* “In sacris Scripturis multo plura nescio, quam scio.” (Epist. 119.)

(2) Isaiah, liii. 7, 8.

A question with sublime importance fraught;
 Opening the portals of celestial light,
 Through which, inspired, the Levite traced the path—
 The glorious path—of Truth, revealing Him—
 Jesus—to whom all prophecy referred,
 And whom Isaiah pictured in the words
 The Eunuch sat perusing. As they rolled,
 Conversing, onward, near a stream they came:
 “Lo! here is water; since it is ordained
 That man be born again, say, is there aught
 To hinder me from being now baptized?”
There is no hind’rance, if thou dost believe,
 Responded Philip; *but, with all thy heart.*
 “I do believe,” the Eunuch humbly said,
 “That Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God.”

The chariot, then, was ordered to stand still;
 And both, alighting, went into the stream, (1)
 Where, as the waters rippled round their feet,
 The Eunuch stooped his head, and was baptized.

Then, instantaneous, Philip disappeared:
 No more the Eunuch saw him—from his side
 Snatched by the Spirit of the Lord away.
 But he went on—in faith still more confirmed—

(1) St. Jerome speaks of this stream, which was called the Fountain of the Æthiopian: it is on the way from Jerusalem to Gaza, near Bethsura. We must suppose that Philip had explained to him the principal duties of a Christian. His profession of faith includes every thing. For, to recognise Jesus Christ as truly the Son of God, is to confess, equivalently, that we must believe all that he has taught, and do all that he has commanded.

Rejoicing in the blessing he had found.
 Philip was carried to Azotus far, (1)
 And traversing the country ; as he passed,
 Preached to the cities Christ of Nazareth,
 Until at Cæsarea he arrived.

By gradual steps the Eunuch had been led— (2)
 With gradual light he issued from the shades
 Of Judaism, to Faith's meridian day.
 These are the ordinary ways of God ;
 Whose works, in nature, as in grace, commence,
 Progress, advance, till they, at length, attain
 Perfection. But not always is this law
 By Providence enforced : from it, whene'er
 He wishes, for high ends, he derogates,
 And, by a signal stroke and sudden, wields
 The violence of mercy—crushing down
 The most rebellious wills ; subjecting hearts,
 Which seemed unconquerable even by Grace.
 Such was the stroke of mercy which laid low
 The pillar—strong and lofty—of the Jews :
 Which smote the persecutor, and he rose
 A glorious apostle !—which achieved
 An individual conquest, that prepared
 The conquest of the universal world.

(1) An ancient town of the Philistines, between Gaza and Cæsarea. This last-mentioned city was anciently called the Tower of Strato, situated on the Mediterranean Sea, different from that surnamed *Philippi*, from Philip, the son of Herod, who had built it in honor of Tiberius Cæsar. The former lay at the foot of mount Lebanon.

(2) Chap. ix.

Saul, who, as yet, was breathing violence (1) ?
 And threats against the followers of the Lord,
 Went to Damascus, with due letters armed,
 Given by the High Priest to the synagogues ; (2)
 Empowered, if in that city he should find,
 Women or men, professing this new faith,
 To bring them prisoners to Jerusalem.
 Upon this errand hurrying, lo ! in sight
 Appears Damascus ; where he burned, ere long,
 To glut his zeal impatient in the woes
 Of guiltless Christians ; when the heavens serene
 Were suddenly with wondrous light illumed,
 Whence rays of glory shot upon his sight
 With brilliancy intense ; dazzled, he fell
 Down from his smoking steed ; when on his ear
 A voice of thunder pealed : " O Saul, O Saul !
 Why dost thou persecute me ? " Terrified,
 " Who art thou Lord ? " he answered. " I am
 Christ,

(1) The same name as that of the ancient king, though differently pronounced by us. The proper pronunciation is *Saul* ; a trifling consideration, but, as referring to so great a man, not unworthy of notice.

(2) Damascus was formerly the capital of Syria. The Jews there were very numerous, for there were many synagogues. Those of Jerusalem had no authority in that city, which was subject to a strange prince. It appears, however, that the ordinances of the chiefs of religion were executed, either because the sovereigns of the country accorded the privilege, or because they paid for it. What was the fanaticism of the young Hebrew, who, not content with persecuting the faithful in Jerusalem, receives authority to carry his fury into distant places ! And how magnanimously did he not atone for his error, in his succeeding career !



Conversion of Saul.

Whom thou art persecuting. (1) It is hard
Against the goad to kick." (2) Trembling still more,
"Lord!" he exclaimed, "what wilt thou have me
do?" (3)

The Lord replied: "Rise; to the city haste,
Where thou shalt learn what thou wilt have to
do." (4)

And they who followed him were filled with awe,
Hearing the voice; but no one could they see. (5)

(1) They who, in any manner, persecute virtuous men, may here learn whom they attack.

(2) A metaphor derived from the goading of oxen, which, if they kick, only irritate the driver, and multiply their wounds. These words imply some resistance in Saul, either actual or passive. It is not impossible that even while he was persecuting the faithful with so much fury, he must have had some rays of light, which occasioned feelings of remorse: but he was unwilling to recede after having gone so far. We are often driven by one act much farther than we intended to go.

(3) The conversion of St. Paul is comprehended in this short sentence. If you make use of the same language, O penitent hearts! you may hope for all things.

(4) And yet St. Paul tells us, in his Epistles, that he had no master but Jesus Christ. That is, he learned, by a revelation from Christ, what he was to know as an apostle, and what he should teach others. But what, as a catechumen, and for his own sanctification, he was to know, he learned from Ananias. In the affairs of salvation, men should be directed by men. The law is general. Even those who are charged with the public instruction, are not exempt. Unhappy he who imagines that he is sufficient for himself!

(5) Here it is said they heard the voice. In the 22d chapter of the Acts, St. Paul, in relating the history of his conversion, declares that those who accompanied him did not hear the voice; therefore the voice they are said to have heard, must have been that of Saul; and this prevents any contradiction. They had good reason to be alarmed. They saw the light, and Saul hurred

Saul rose, obedient ; but could not proceed,
For he was blind : they lead him by the hands,
And brought him to Damascus, where, three days,
He saw not, ate not, neither did he drink.

Meantime, a true disciple of the Lord
Dwelt at Damascus, Ananias named.
He, in a vision, heard the voice of God
Calling upon him : " Ananias !" Who,
With docile heart, " Lord, I am here," replied.
" Arise, and to the street called Strait, repair ;
And in the house of Judas thou wilt find
A man named Saul, of Tarsus, for behold
He prayeth." (That disciple entering in
Saul saw in spirit ; who upon his eyes
Putting his hands, their sight conferred anew.)
" Lord, I have heard by many of this man,"
Responded Ananias ; " he hath done
Much evil to us in Jerusalem :
And from the chief priests he hath power, e'en here,
The saints to imprison who invoke thy name."
The Lord said to him : " Rise up, go thy way ;
A vessel of election is this man—
Among the Gentiles he shall bear my name,
To Israel's children, and to mighty kings ;
And I will show him what he must endure." (1)

to the earth, terrified, humbled, palpitating with awe, and heard him conversing with some one they did not perceive.

(1) Christ seems to speak of the future sufferings of his new apostle with glory. As if he had said : The persecutor shall be persecuted ; and, after having been so infuriated against me and

He went his way ; and, entering the house,
 Upon the penitent imposed his hands, (1)
 And said affectionately : " Brother Saul,
 Jesus, our Lord, who did appear to thee
 Upon thy journey, bade me hither come
 To heal thee of thy blindness, through His power,
 That with the Holy Ghost thou mayest be filled." (2)

He spake ; and from the opening eyes of Saul
 Scales fell, and he beheld the light again ;
 And, rising, was baptized. He ate, and strength
 To all his limbs returned—peace to his heart ;
 That peace which grace bestows, and converse pure,
 Such as with the disciples, many days,
 He held, while at Damascus tarrying.

mine, he will undergo, for my cause, more trials than he inflicted evils upon others.

(1) This imposition of hands was not confirmation, as Calvin affirmed. Ananias was neither an apostle nor a bishop ; and, supposing he was, he would have confirmed Saul before baptizing him. It was merely to cure him of his blindness that Ananias laid hands upon him—fulfilling the promise of Christ : *They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and these shall be cured.* (Mark, xvi.)

(2) He received the plenitude of the Holy Ghost in baptism. There is no doubt that, being so perfectly converted, he received, with the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost, who, as the principle of all sanctity, had already dwelt in him. But, in baptism, he received a more abundant measure : probably, as much as the apostles received on the day of Pentecost—God, who associated him to their apostleship, having willed that the Holy Ghost should be given to him, as to them, without any human ministry. In so extraordinary a vocation, extraordinary means do not surprise us. It is certain that Christ appeared to him in person, that he might also testify to his resurrection : *And last of all he was seen also by me, &c.* (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

No time he lost ; but to the synagogues
 Hastened to preach JESUS, the Son of God.
 But all who heard him were amazed, and said :
 " Is not this he, who, in Jerusalem,
 Pursued, with vengeance, those who dared that name
 Invoke ? Did not he, with the same intent,
 Come hither, authorized to bind in chains
 All he should meet, and drag them to the priests ?"
 But Saul recked not their murmurs : waxing strong,
 More vehemently he announced abroad
 JESUS, affirming that this is the Christ.
 Such was the glorious reparation made
 To Him—the Son of God—whom, in his saints,
 Saul long had persecuted : such the scene
 Before the world triumphantly displayed ;
 Marvellous to men—agreeable to God.
 From which withdrawing—his first duty done—
 Into Arabia Saul bent his way. (1)
 Whence, afterwards, (how long remains concealed,)
 Back to Damascus he returned, to endure
 Evils unnumbered for the cause of Christ.
 The Jews consulted how to cut him off,
 Revengeful of his change : by bribery lured,
 Or urged by calumny, or forced by threats,
 The nation's governor, who held command
 Under Aretas, caused the city-gates

(1) *But when it pleased him . . . to reveal his Son to me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, immediately I descended not to flesh and blood ; . . . but I went into Arabia, &c.* (Galat. i. 15, 16, 17.) By some it has been thought, that God called him into a solitary life, in order to prepare him for his apostolic functions. After some time, he returned to Damascus.

To be well guarded, that he might be seized.
 But the conspiracy was known to Saul,
 And cautiously eluded: whilst the watch
 Was, night and day, set on the brazen gates.
 Amid the gloom and silence of the night
 He was, with dexterous artifice, conveyed
 By his disciples on the outer wall,
 Whence, let down in a basket, he escaped. (1)

Back to Jerusalem Saul now returns.
 How changed from him—the terror of the “saints”—
 When for Damascus he departed thence!
 Now in the holy city he appears—
 A new apostle of the truth—to see
 The Chief of all the faithful and the Head—
 Peter—with whom he tarried fifteen days. (2)
 Of all his other colleagues none he met,
 Excepting James, the brother of the Lord.
 The faithful viewed, with wonder diffident,
 This neophyte; doubt mingled with their joy:

(1) *At Damascus, the governor of the nation under Aretas the king, guarded the city of the Damascenes to apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands.* (2 Cor. ii. 32, 33.)

(2) *Then, after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and I tarried with him fifteen days; but other of the apostles I saw none, saving James, the brother of the Lord.* (Galat. i. 18, 19.) This was, on the part of Paul, a visit of deference to Peter, on whom Christ had built his Church, and whom he, of course, with all the other faithful, regarded as the chief bishop. He clearly gives us to understand, that the object of his visit was not to be instructed, because Peter's teacher had been his likewise; but to acknowledge in Peter the dignity and superiority to which he was entitled.

And they were loth to take him to their ranks,
 Which still he would adorn, if but sincere.
 At length through Barnabas he found access
 To the apostles: they were told the tale
 Of marvel which had happened on his way
 To persecute the saints: how Christ appeared,
 And, clad in lustre, spake to Saul; and how,
 Changed on the spot, among the Damascenes,
 He nobly suffered for the name of Christ.

Then was he numbered with the brotherhood;
 Associate with them, at Jerusalem,
 In coming in and going out; always
 Preaching intrepidly the name of Christ.
 And with the Gentile proselytes he spoke;
 And with the Greeks disputed, who, enraged,
 Conspired to kill him; but their scheme was foiled:
 To Cæsarea by the brethren sent,
 He fled away to Syria's capital. (1)

Upon his head the fury of the Jews
 Seemed, like a storm-cloud, gathering; when, no
 more,
 They saw him in Jerusalem, they seemed
 Oblivious of the others: for a time,
 Through all Judea was the Church with peace—
 Through Galilee and Samaria—blest:
 The fear of God walked with her, joyous in
 The consolation of the Holy Ghost.

(1) Tarsus: *Then I came into the parts of Syria and Cilicia*
Galat. i. 21.)

Now on the earth the longed-for period dawned, (1)
 Destined the glorious secret to reveal
 Of the vocation—by the prophets sung—
 Of Gentiles to the gospel ; secret, still,
 Involved in mystery, and hung with doubt,
 To every Jewish mind : for, it was deemed
 That though the nations might engrafted be
 Upon the trunk of Faith, they first should pass
 Through Judaism. But now the clouds disperse ;
 And in full day the Light of Truth ascends,
 To shed His beams o'er all the exulting world.
 Through Peter was this revelation made,
 The Chief of the apostles ; who claims not
 The title without justice, nor the rank
 Pre-eminent, unauthorized, assumes,
 Which gave him power supreme to rule the Church.
 Through him the portals of Eternal Life
 Were opened to the nations, as through him
 Already to the Hebrews : his compeers
 Shared not the labors of the harvest-field,
 Till he had gathered in the earliest fruit.
 His high authority was scaled in Heaven :
 For wonders, which amazed, convinced the Jews,
 Followed, like handmaids, and obeyed his will.

Peace still was reigning through the growing
 Church ;
 And Peter, vigilant o'er all his flock,
 Passed through the country, visiting the saints (2)

(1) Chap. x.

(2) The first Christians were generally called "saints ;" as we

In every place, until, at length, he came
 To Lydda : (1) there he found a certain man,
 Æneas named, who eight long years had lain
 Bed-ridden with the palsy, which defied
 The skill of science, and no art could heal.
 His state notorious all the city knew.
 And if, through Peter, Heaven should raise him up,
 Then would they yield submissive to his power.
 The apostle enters : with benignant eye,
 He looks, in majesty and pity, on
 The wasted sufferer, and then calmly said :
 " Æneas, Jesus healeth thee ; arise,
 And make thy bed." He instantly arose !
 Full in the public gaze this deed was done ;
 Lydda and Saron witnessed it ; and all
 That dwelt there were converted to the Lord. (2)

To this great miracle, a greater far
 Succeeded. By the ministry of man,
 None greater can Omnipotence achieve,
 Than from the regions of the dead call back,
 Into this breathing world, the spirit flown.

Not far from Lydda, in the quiet town

and in many parts of the Epistles of St. Paul. *Christian* and *saint* were once synonymous terms : are they now ?

(1) A city of Palestine, a short distance from the Mediterranean Sea. It is afterwards called *Diaspolis*. A council was held there, which condemned the errors of Pelagius, who saved his person from condemnation by a dissimulation which is not seldom practised by men in similar circumstances.

(2) Saron was the name, not of a city, but of a fertile country, according to St. Jerome, densely populated.

Of Joppe, dwelt a matron meek and fair,
 Who, 'mongst the brethren, like a precious flower,
 Bloomed in the beauty of her faith serene,
 And o'er the garden of the Church diffused
 The sweetest fragrance of good works—of alms,
 Of prayer, of innocence, of charity.
 Her name Tabitha was—styled by the Greeks (1)
Dorcas: it chanced, by Heaven's all-wise design,
 That then she sickened; and, amid the grief
 Disconsolate of Joppe, she expired.
 Her corpse—the due ablutions being done—
 Lay in an upper chamber, on a couch.

To Lydda were incontinently sent
 (For rumor told them Peter still was there)
 Two men, conjuring him, without delay,
 To haste to Joppe. By the Spirit led,
 Peter departed with them. At the gates
 Hundreds, with anxious interest, had thronged
 To meet the apostle, whom, with solemn joy,
 They eagerly conducted to the place
 Where Dorcas slept in the cold arms of death.
 With doleful exclamations he was met,
 Upon the threshold of that upper room:
 Widows were mourning there in deep distress—
 For they had lost a more than mother—one
 Who clothed them, and their desolation cheered. (2)

(1) The Greek word *Dorcas* signifies a doe. The Syriac word *Tabitha* means the same. It is not said whether this woman was married or not. Charity sanctifies every state of life.

(2) *They made the good works of Tabitha speak*, says Saint

Showing their robes and garments,—“These,” they
 sighed,
 Lamenting, “these, Tabitha! are thy gifts!”
 The heart of Peter, mid this scene of wo,
 With sorrow bled. Bidding the crowd retire,
 Close by the couch he knelt, in silent prayer:
 Then, looking on the body fixedly—
 Which with his tears was watered—he exclaimed:
 “Tabitha, rise!”—and lo! her eyelids move—
 She stirs, as from a slumber—looks around,
 Sees Peter leaning o’er her—and sits up.
 He stretched his hand, and raised her from her couch:
 Then calling in the widows and the saints,
 To them presented her, alive and well. (1)

Cyprian, the most eloquent of all prayers. Peter was touched with compassion. How much more was Jesus Christ, who, in the persons of these widows, was the object of her charity. De oper. et Elcem. Cap. 2.

(1) Beyond all doubt Tabitha was saved; since she had taken with her to the other world the treasure of her good deeds and alms. If so, it may be asked, if St. Peter, in restoring her to life, did not do her wrong? Putting aside Peter, who was a mere instrument, let us look to God, the author of the miracle. *All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth*, says the prophet. This should suffice as a general answer to such questions. Nevertheless, it is permitted those who respectfully examine the ways of the Lord, in the absence of certainty, to hold to probability. Thus do theologians act. And they have said, that it is by no means probable that God would expose anew, at the risk of their salvation, those who had once died in his grace: that if we cannot absolutely affirm, that after their resurrection they were impeccable, the Lord secures their salvation by means the infallible effect of which is well known; and, losing nothing in this respect, they increase their merits by a lengthened life. It is not thus with those who have departed in a state of sin. Restored to life, they

Throughout all Joppe soon these tidings rang,
 And added numbers to the Christian fold.
 There, many days, not in the mansions proud
 Of opulence and grandeur he abode,
 But with an humble artisan, sincere
 In the new faith—a tanner, Simon named.
 From that obscure retreat—'tis now the hour—
 Must he go forth, to spread the gospel-beams
 Among the Gentiles, who in darkness sat,
 And in the shades of death. Already now
 Preparatory symptoms—like the dawn,
 Dim harbinger of day-light—had begun
 Within a neighboring city to appear.
 'Twas Cæsarea: there, a valiant man,
 By name Cornelius, o'er the Italian band
 Holding the station of Centurion,
 Dwelt with his family—who, like himself,
 Were given to religion, fearing God,
 Performing alms-deeds, and devout in prayer. (1)

may obtain grace, and persevere in it. Theologians add, that their sentence had not been pronounced; or, at least, the execution of it had been suspended: because it is decreed, *from hell there is no redemption*:—a truth which, according to them, can suffer no exception.

(1) Cornelius was just, even before his conversion to Christianity; since St. Paul says of him: God does not except persons, *but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh justice, is acceptable to him.* (Acts, x. 35.) The Pelagians concluded that man could become just merely by the force of his free will. Catholic doctors have refuted them, by establishing the necessity of a supernatural prevenient grace, co-operating with justifying and meritorious works. But, it may be said, if Cornelius was just, what need had he of the preaching of St. Peter? I answer: 1. Pursuing his ordinary conduct, recompensed in him the good use

Such was the man, so faithful to the law
 By nature graven on the human heart;
 So just, amid the vices of the world,
 As Noah, and the Patriarchs, of yore.
 Such was Cornelius, destined to become
 The first-born of the Gentiles in the faith.

Absorbed in prayer, towards the ninth hour of day,
 He had a vision; clearly as the light,
 He saw an angel of the Lord approach, (1)
 And heard his voice distinct:—"Cornelius!"
 With terror seized, and shuddering, he replied:
 "What is it, Lord?" The angel, then, to him:
 "Thy prayers and alms-deeds have gone up to
 heaven,

ne made of grace by a more excellent grace; which added perfection to justice, and to the sanctity of the natural law the more sublime sanctity of the Christian law. 2. This second grace became necessary for him, even for salvation; because, since the publication of the gospel, which commenced on Pentecost day, it was necessary to salvation to have an explicit faith in Jesus Christ: for, in truth, it was not known then that the Gentiles were called; and this justified Cornelius for not yet having embraced it. But this great mystery was on the point of being fully revealed, as it was, by a glorious distinction, in his person.

Though not, as yet, a Christian in faith, he was in good works, to which God did not delay in adding faith. How many Christians by faith are pagans in deeds—who are, too often, punished by the loss of faith!

(1) St. Thomas has said, that if a Gentile had faithfully kept the natural law, God would send an angel to instruct him, rather than leave him without the knowledge necessary for salvation. The example of Cornelius is a proof of this; and it is confirmed by the axiom of St. Augustine: *God does not refuse grace to any one who does what lies in his power.*

A blest memorial in the sight of God.
 Send down to Joppe men, without delay,
 And hither call one Simon, surnamed Peter ;
 He lodgeth in another Simon's house—
 A tanner—near the sea-side : him consult
 With diligence : to thee, what is required,
 He will make known, and tell thee what to do.”

The angel vanished. With obedience prompt,
 Cornelius hastened to fulfil the task :
 To three good men the vision he disclosed—
 Two servants and a soldier, fearing God,
 All to his orders subject ; whom, as bid,
 In quest of Peter he dispatched to Joppe.

Now on the hills the mid-day sun was bright,
 And Joppe basked in lustre, as her towers
 Welcomed the couriers near. Peter, meanwhile,
 Had to the summit of the house retired, (1)
 To yield his mind to prayer. But hunger pressed
 Upon his wearied frame, and he would eat :
 When lo ! ere food was brought, he swooned away
 Into an ecstasy of mind, and saw
 The blue heaven opening on his raptured eye,
 And from the firmament, at every point
 Sustained, a sheet descending to the earth ; (2)

(1) The roofs of the houses were flat, in Palestine. Peter retired there to pray, about noon. The Jews had consecrated to prayer the first, third, sixth, and ninth hours. Hence *prime*, *tierce*, *sext*, *none*, in the Christian Church.

(2) This sheet represented the Church, which was to receive in her bosom the Gentiles, whom the Jews looked upon as impure

Wherein was every kind of animals
 Four-footed, and of reptiles of the sod,
 And fowls of air: and then this voice was heard:
 "Peter, arise; these creatures kill, and eat."
 He answering, said: "Far be it from me, Lord;
 Ne'er have I tasted aught unclean, impure." (1)
 The voice returned: "That which the Lord hath
 cleansed,
 Call not unclean;" and this repeated thrice:
 And then the sheet was drawn up into heaven. (2)

Whilst on this vision musing Peter sat,
 Scanning its meaning and its object, lo!
 The men from Cæsarea sent arrive,
 And stand before the gates of Simon's house,
 Asking for Peter, who, in thought profound,

and abominable. The Church comes from heaven, and must return thither—as the sheet that stretched down upon the earth, but was suspended at each corner in the skies. Some interpreters think that all the animals which it contained were impure. Others are of a different opinion. What appears certain, from the answer of St. Peter, is, either that they were all unclean, or that he understood the voice to command him to eat of the clean and unclean alike.

(1) God made use of this figure, because, besides the vocation of the Gentiles, which was its principal object, it insinuated the abolition of the distinction between clean and unclean meats, recommended by the old law. The Rabbins themselves have admitted that this distinction would cease after the coming of the Messiah.

(2) The repetition was made, the better to assure St. Peter of the reality of the vision. It figured, likewise, the invocation of the three persons of the Trinity, by which the Gentiles were to enter into the Church.

Was still absorbed. To whom the Spirit said :
 " Behold, three men are seeking thee ; arise,
 Descend, and with them, nothing doubting, go ;
 For on their errand are they sent by me."

Peter went down ; and meeting them, " All hail .
 Exclaimed. " Ye ask if Simon lodgeth here,
 Peter surnamed ; I am the one ye seek :
 The object that hath brought you hither tell."
 " Cornelius, a Centurion," they replied ;
 " An upright man, and one that feareth God,
 Esteemed by all the nation of the Jews,
 Received an answer of an holy angel,
 To send us for thee, into his own house,
 That he may hear the words which thou wilt speak."
 He bade them enter. And as now the night
 Her sombre wings was spreading o'er the sea,
 They lodged beneath this hospitable roof.

Then, as the morrow on the waters blushed,
 With them he started, followed by a train—
 From Joppe—of believers ; and, next day,
 Triumphant entered Cæsarea's gates.
 Cornelius, with his kinsmen and his friends,
 Awaiting their arrival anxiously,
 Went out to meet them : and it came to pass
 As Peter entered, that Cornelius fell
 Respectful at his feet, and would adore.
 But Peter lifting him, " Arise !" exclaimed,
 " For nothing more than mortal man am I." (1)

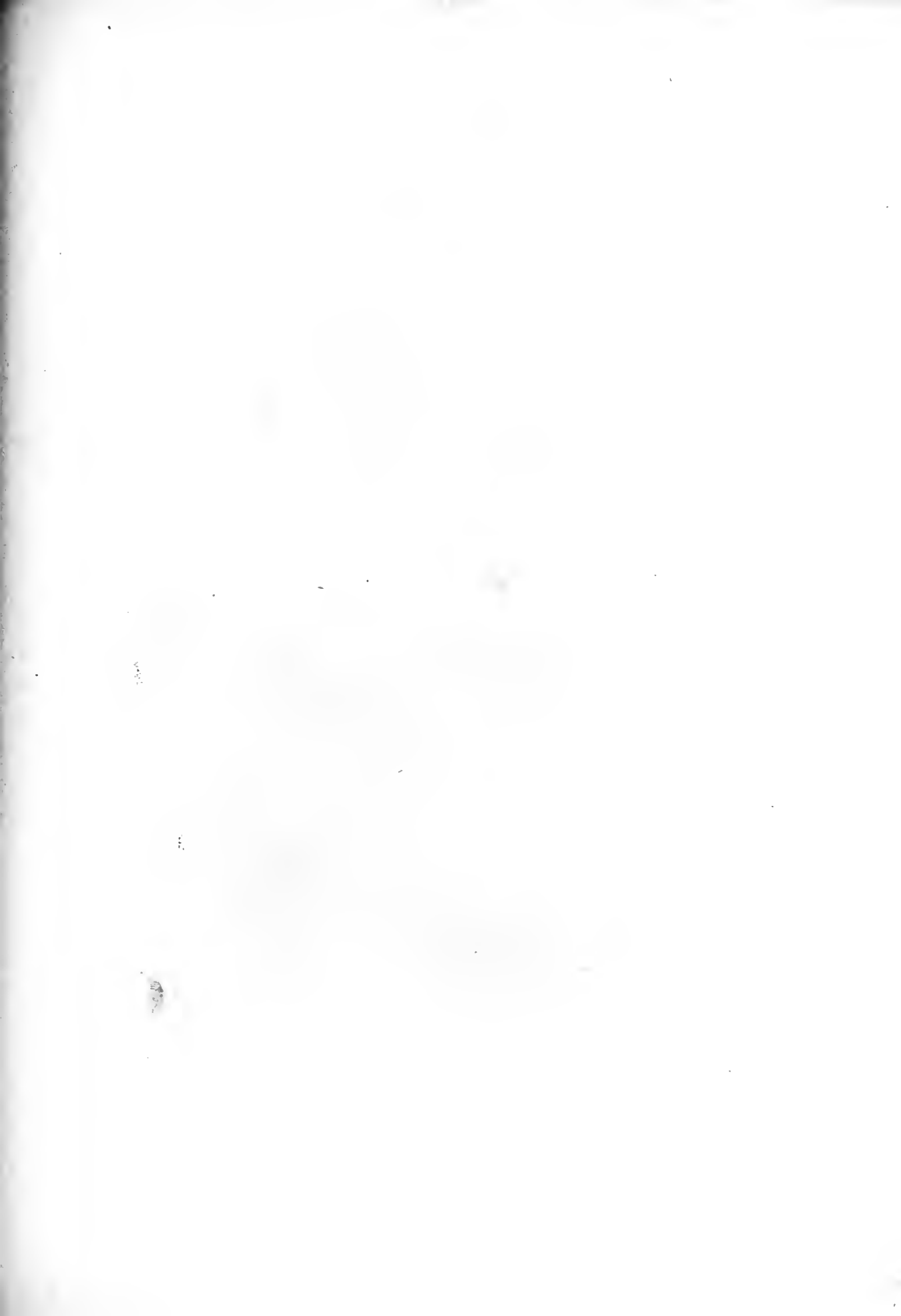
(1) Not that Cornelius took him for a god Cornelius was too

Then, talking, they came in, and joined the throng
 Assembled there ; whom Peter thus addressed :
 “ You know it is unlawful for a Jew
 With other nations intercourse to hold.
 But God hath lately made me understand
 That no man should be deemed unclean. Wherefore
 Debating not, I came as soon as called.
 And now I ask the cause for which you sent.”

“ Four days ago,” Cornelius replied,
 “ At the ninth hour, while praying in my house,
 A young man, vested in resplendent white, (1)
 Stood suddenly before me, and thus spake :
 ‘ Thy prayer, Cornelius, is heard ; thy alms
 Have gone up, a memorial in the sight
 Of favoring Heaven : to Joppe, therefore, send
 For Simon, surnamed Peter. In the house—
 Hard by the sea-side—of another Simon—

enlightened to be capable of such an error ; as he regarded, merely as a messenger from God, the angel who had appeared to him shining with glory. But he looked upon Peter as an extraordinary man, whom he should approach with the marks of profound veneration : this homage, due to his dignity, St. Peter refused from humility. The Centurion had already sanctified his household ; and now he desires to sanctify his friends and relations. A soldier becomes an apostle. Sanctity produces zeal in every condition of life.

(1) *A man* ; that is to say, the angel appeared under a human figure : for it was not an intellectual vision, but a sensible and corporeal apparition. And here it is worthy of remark, that when it is said that his prayers were heard, his alms are also added : to teach us that it was principally on account of his alms that his prayers were efficacious. Whoever unites these two means, has discovered the infallible secret of moving the heart of God.





Ramleh, with the Hills of Judah.

By trade a tanner—he may now be found.
 I sent obedient: and well hast thou done
 By yielding to my wishes; for all here
 Are gathered, to be taught the things which God
 Commands that we should know.” Peter replied
 “In very deed am I now more convinced,
 That God respects not persons; but, alike
 In every nation, whoso feareth Him,
 And worketh justice, is acceptable.
 The wall of separation is thrown down:
 The word to Israel’s children God hath sent,
 Preaching the reign of peace, through JESUS CHRIST,
 Who is the Lord of all. What hath occurred
 Throughout Judea, ye cannot but know,
 In Galilee beginning: how the Lord,
 After the baptism on the Jordan preached
 By John, the unction of the Holy Ghost
 And power conferred on Christ of Nazareth,
 Who, as he went about, did good to all;
 And from the Devil rescuing those oppressed;—
 For God was with him. (2) And of all he did,
 Throughout Judea, in Jerusalem,
 We are the witnesses: we saw Him die,

(1) *God was with him*; for he was united to him in the unity of person. This text was abused by Nestorius and others, for the purpose of making a distinction of persons in Jesus Christ: the person of God who was with Christ, and the person of Christ with whom God was. It is true, the personal union is not here expressed, but it is not contradicted. The Catholic dogma on this subject is founded on many texts. Whoever separates them, has but a part of truth; and if he deny the remainder, he is completely in error.

In grief and ignominy, on the tree ;
 But then we, likewise, saw Him risen again,
 Victorious over death,—made manifest
 Not to all men, but to the chosen few (1)
 Whom God, as witnesses, had pre-ordained—
 Even to us, who with Him ate and drank,
 And converse held, when risen from the tomb.
 He hath commanded us to preach His name,
 And testify that God hath made him Judge
 Of all the living, and of all the dead. (2)
 Of Him the prophets testimony gave—
 That all, believing in His holy name,
 Shall full remission of their sins receive.”

(1) Why not to all the people? asks the unbeliever. If Christ had appeared to all, infidels, like himself, would not have believed it the more. Lazarus was seen by all the nation; and the only effect produced was to inspire the enemies of truth with the design of putting him to death a second time. *If they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe one arisen from the dead.* (Luke xvi.)

(2) This same expression occurs in the creed. The sense is not clearly determined. By the *living and the dead*, some understand the *just and unjust*. Others explain the *dead* in its literal acceptation; and understand by the *living*, those who will be in the world when Christ shall come to judge mankind. These, too, must, however, undergo the general fate of all the children of Adam, and die, but will immediately rise.

A third explanation may be hazarded: it is so simple, that it possibly may be the true one. The *dead* are those who are deceased; the *living*, those who are still on earth. Christ will judge those that have preceded us to the tomb; and us, who are left behind. There appears some foundation for this explanation in the words of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: *The dead who are in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive, &c.* (1 Thess. iii. 15, 16.) He is our Judge and Saviour: we must fear and love Him.

He had not finished, ere the Holy Ghost
 Fell on all them that heard the words he spake. (1)
 They of the circumcision, who had come (2)
 From Joppe with him, marvelled to behold
 The Holy Spirit on the Gentiles poured—
 Who spake with tongues, and magnified the Lord.
 Thus, in full light, Heaven's secrets were displayed,
 And Jewish prejudice for ever quenched.

Peter resumed: "Can any man forbid,
 That these who have received, as well as we,
 The Holy Ghost, with water be baptized?"
 Then, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
 They were regenerated into life.
 And for some days among these Gentile-saints,
 In spiritual conversation, he remained.

Fame spread these joyous tidings o'er the land: (3)

(1) They had received sanctifying grace before baptism; as always is the case when the disposition carried to this sacrament is perfected by charity. They had received the effect of confirmation with the miraculous and sensible gifts which accompanied it in those early times. God, the author of the rule, is not subject to it: and it was not without reason that he dispensed with it on this occasion, since this was the last miracle that rendered complete the proof of the vocation of the Gentiles.

(2) There were, therefore, uncircumcised faithful, some interpreters conclude. But they are deceived. If there had been, would so many prodigies have been necessary to persuade Saint Peter that the uncircumcised could be admitted to baptism? The *circumcised faithful* are not here distinguished from the *uncircumcised faithful*, but from the *circumcised unbelievers*: that is, the Jews who had not embraced the faith of Jesus Christ.

(3) Chap. xi.

They reached Judea, where the Apostles learned,
With thankful hearts, as all the brethren, too,
That e'en the Gentiles had received the word.
Yet when, exulting, from his conquest high,
Peter returned up to Jerusalem,
Some of the circumcised contended with him :
" Why didst thou go to men uncircumcised,"
They doubtingly inquired, " and eat with them ?"
To whom, relating all that had occurred,
In proper order, Peter thus replied :
" While in the town of Joppe, fixed in prayer,
An ecstasy came o'er me, and I saw
A vision : as it were a mighty sheet
From heaven, by four corners, hanging down,
And stretching near me : in it I beheld
Four-footed creatures of the earth, and beasts,
And creeping things, and fowls that live in air.
Meanwhile, a voice addressed me : ' Kill and eat.'
To which I answered : ' Not so, Lord, not so ;
For I have never tasted aught unclean
Or common.' But the voice again from heaven :
' Call not that common which the Lord hath cleansed.'
And this distinctly did it utter thrice ;
When all were taken up to heaven again.

" It chanced, at this same moment, that three men
Came hurrying to the house wherein I lodged,
From Cæsarea sent to me ; with whom
The Spirit bade me, nothing doubting, go :
By these six brethren followed, I obeyed ;
And to the dwelling of a man repaired,

Who told us that an angel he had seen,
 Commanding him forthwith to Joppe send,
 And there for Simon, surnamed Peter, call ;
 With this assurance : he will teach thee truths
 Whereby thou shalt be saved and thy whole house.
 No sooner had I spoken, than on them,
 As formerly on us, the Spirit fell :
 Then on my memory broke the promised word :
With water John, indeed, baptized ; but you
Shall with the Holy Spirit be baptized. (1)
 If, then, the same grace God on them conferred
 As upon us, believers in the Lord—
 Christ Jesus—who was I, to oppose His will ?”

Thus reasoned Peter ; from whose lips inspired, (2)
 Conviction dropped into the hearts of all :
 For they who questioned him were virtuous men,
 Living and seeking for the truth alone :
 Hence, after hearing him, they held their peace,
 And glorified the Lord, who, unto life,
 Repentance also to the Gentiles gave. (3)

To these first triumphs in the pagan world
 Succeeded others, yet more glorious far :

(1) Christ's baptism was also of water ; but it conferred, likewise, the Holy Ghost. John's did not.

(2) Peter's reasoning was unanswerable. It was evident that Cornelius and his household had received the *grace* of the sacrament ; how, then, could the *sign* be refused ?

(3) That is, salvation, designated by life everlasting, which is the *term*, and repentance, which is the *means*. Without the means, who can hope to arrive at the term ?

The saints, who, by the persecution's rage
 Which Stephen's death excited, were dispersed,
 Had wandered, homeless, into distant lands—
 To Cyprus, Antioch, Phœnicia :
 But, prompted by their native prejudice,
 Proclaimed the gospel to the Jews alone.
 Yet in their number, happily, were some
 Of Cyprus and Cyrene, who announced
 The name of Jesus also to the Greeks. (4)
 God's mighty hand was with them : crowds believed
 Their word, and were converted to the Lord.

Since on Cornelius and his house, of late,
 The Sun of Justice, in full splendor, rose,
 The cloud of doubt, which o'er the Gentiles' doom
 So long and dense had gathered, was dispelled.
 The problem melted—for it had been solved.
 The Church, residing at Jerusalem,
 Received the gladsome tidings, and as far
 As Antioch deputed Barnabas ;
 Who should approve the work, and, if need be,
 The finishing and crowning stroke apply.

The good had been achieved ; naught now re-
 mained
 But to secure, and spread abroad, its fruits.

(4) Greek Gentiles ; as appears from the contrast made in the text between Greeks and Jews. Had these new preachers heard of the conversion of Cornelius, or did they follow the movement of the Holy Ghost ? We know not. It appears probable that the tidings of the conversion of that Centurion must have reached them.

With rapture Barnabas, arriving, saw
 The operation of the grace of God—
 Changing their hearts, illumining their minds.
 In cheering language, he conjured them all
 With noble fortitude to persevere.
 With reverence they heard his voice ; for he
 A good man was, full of the Holy Ghost,
 And full of faith : the Neophytes waxed strong,
 And countless converts yielded to the faith.

The gospel-harvest whitening spread afar,
 O'er fertile fields : new reapers were required.
 But there was one, in Heaven's omniscient eye,
 Destined to gather in, from all the earth,
 The mystic grain : him (God had thus decreed)
 At Tarsus dwelling lonely, Barnabas
 Sought for and found, and brought to Antioch.
 One year entire together they conversed,
 And multitudes instructed in that Church.
 Blest Antioch ! where first was given the name—
 The glorious name—of CHRISTIANS to the saints. (1)

Drawn by the rumor of these marvellous things—

(1) This name has continued ever since. The virtues it expresses are found yet in some that bear it ; in most of them, the name only brings out in stronger relief the contrast between their virtues and their vices.

Julian the Apostate issued a decree, by which he suppressed the name, and styled them Galileans. He feared the name at which the devils tremble, as a holy Father observes. In this measure, however, it is plain he was wanting in common sense : the *things* themselves may, more or less, be dependant on the caprice of princes ; *names* are not.

Perhaps to witness and take part in them—
 There came, in those days, from Jerusalem,
 Prophets to Antioch. One of whom, inspired,
 Named Agabus, foretold that there would rage
 A general famine over all the world,
 Which under Claudius should come to pass.
 Against this scourge, in season, to prepare,
 The brethren—each according to his means—
 Proposed to send relief to those that dwelt (1)
 Throughout Judea. In the ancients' hands
 These alms they placed, through Barnabas and Saul
 Thus charity, the germ of every good,
 Bound heart to heart in sympathy divine.

Now o'er the earth the apostles were dispersed, (2)
 Bearing the gospel to its utmost bounds;
 And yet, though severed far by space apart,
 One symbol centred all their minds and souls:
 This the great point to which—as to the pole
 The needle turns—their common faith aspired:—
 In essence ONE, though preached to various climes,
 And through all ages to endure the SAME.

(1) Two reasons may be assigned why the brethren in Judea would stand most in need of relief. 1. They had been stripped of all their possessions: the Gentiles, on embracing Christianity, were not. 2. The Gentiles were not as yet persecuted by the idolaters as the Jews (converted) had been by their nation.

Since the famine was to be universal, avarice would have suggested that they should provide for themselves and not for strangers. Charity, on the contrary, told them to risk their own comforts for the necessities of their brethren. Under which of these influences are we?

(2) Chap. xii.

Peter, meanwhile, Jerusalem forsook,
 And fixed at Antioch his see supreme.
 Where, though he made his permanent abode,
 Still, as their wants required, through provinces
 And towns he journeyed with his colleagues oft.
 Yet everywhere the fury of the Jews
 Pursued the Apostles, and the Apostles' Chief.

The bloody sword of Herod was unsheathed
 Against the leaders of the Church: the first
 To fall beneath his vengeance, and to die—
 A Martyr in the cause of Christ—was James, (1)
 John's brother. Finding that the Jews with joy—
 With sanguinary joy—beheld his fate,
 On Peter next the tyrant dared to seize. (2)

(1) This persecution was waged by Herod Agrippa—different from Herod who beheaded John the Baptist, and from the Agrippa before whom Paul pleaded. The first was his paternal uncle; the second his son. This prince had no authority in Jerusalem; nevertheless, he was permitted to exercise sovereign authority over the officers of his house—since he put to death the guards of Peter—and over the Galileans, his subjects; as were the two Apostles, one of whom he beheaded, and the other imprisoned. Pilate paid this deference to Herod when he sent Jesus to him, hearing that Jesus was a Galilean.

James was the son of Zebedee, and is called the *greater*; one of the three disciples whom Christ most cherished; the first that had the honor to shed his blood for his Master's name;—a much greater distinction than that which his ambition formerly desired and asked. His body, which was translated to Spain, is the object of pious pilgrimage from every part of the Catholic world.

(2) Pilate condemned Jesus because he feared the people. In order to please them, Herod beheaded James and imprisoned Peter. Both were murderers.

'Twas now the season of the azymes : crowds
 Of stranger-Jews were in Jerusalem,
 Rejoicing in the suffering and disgrace
 Of him who, foremost in the ranks of Christ—
 His Vicar, and His representative—
 The truth with zeal unquenchable sustained.

Peter was apprehended : in the gloom
 And solitude of prison chained, and watched
 By four strong files of soldiers ; with the intent,
 After the paschal season should be o'er,
 To sacrifice him to the people's rage.

The widowed Church mourned o'er her suffering
 Head ;
 And at her altars prayers—incessant prayers—
 Were offered for him to the throne of God.
 Weep not, weep not, afflicted Spouse of Christ !
 Thy orisons have pleaded not in vain :
 The arm of Herod, and the sword of fate,
 May be uplifted, but can never strike.
 That power, which opened once the prison-gates,
 And let the apostle free, is not abridged ;
 Beneath it, as his ægis, Peter sleeps,
 And will awake triumphant in its might.

Upon his irons Peter calmly lay,
 Between two soldiers slumbering at the door.
 The guarders kept their sentry vigilant,
 Amid the darkness, through which glimmered dim
 A solitary torch : when, by his side,

An angel of the Lord, arrayed in light,
Which threw its beams around the prison, stood.
He touched the apostle, raised him up, and said :
"Rise quickly ;" and, from off his hands, the chains
Dropped of themselves. "Put on thy sandals now,
And gird thyself, and cast thy garments round,
And follow." Peter, by the angel led,
Quitted the cell : but little did he think
That his escape was real ;—or a dream,
Or else a vision—he imagined all.

Now, having passed the first and second guard,
The iron gate, which to the city leads,
They reached ; spontaneously it opened wide,
And they were in the streets, at liberty.
The blessed angel vanished into air.

Then Peter, turning to the vault of heaven—
Where infinite stars were burning, and the moon
Shone, in full glory, through the fleecy clouds—
His wondering eyes, and, on the streets around
And mansions gazing,—felt that he was free.
"Now do I know, in very deed," he mused,
"That God his holy angel hath sent down,
From Herod's wrath to rescue me, and thwart
The hopes and expectations of the Jews."

Profoundly pondering, to the house he came
(For an asylum must he somewhere seek)
Of Mary, mother of that John surnamed
Mark, where a number of the saints had met

To pass the night in prayer: when at the door
 He eager knocked, a damsel, Rhodè named,
 Listened attentively, and knew his voice.
 Wildered with joy, she opened not, but ran
 To tell them, Peter on the threshold stood.
 "Peter!" they cried; "why, woman, thou art mad!"
 But yet more she persisted—he is there.
 "Impossible!—his angel it must be!" (1)

Still did he knock: they opened, and behold!
 He stood before them; and they were amazed.
 Screams, shrieks of terror, in confusion rose.
 Meekly he beckoned to them not to fear,
 And to be silent. He related, then,
 How from the prison God had rescued him:
 And charging them the tidings to convey
 To James, and to the brethren, he withdrew. (2)

(1) This text has often been cited against the Calvinists, to prove that every individual has his guardian angel. Calvin, who felt the force of this passage, attempted to elude it by saying, that Peter had an angel guardian during the time of his imprisonment and not after. How did he learn this? Was another angel sent to reveal this to him? The very expression, *his angel*, shows the conviction of the primitive Christians that each one was provided with *his own* angel.

They were also of opinion that the angel sometimes assumed the appearance of the persons they attended: this is, even now, the idea of some theologians. This they found on the fact of some saints who appeared, at the same time, in different places, without being conscious of it themselves; and they conclude that it was their angel: or, if not, it was a body aerial and inanimate, to which God gave the features and voice of those who thus appeared. All this is involved in mystery, which will be removed only in another world.

(2) James the less, bishop of Jerusalem, called in Scripture, the

Gray dawns the matin-twilight in the east,
 And night sinks back to chaos. In the cell
 Lay the rough chains; but Peter—where was he?
 No irons could secure him: he is gone.
 Great consternation on the soldiers seized.
 Herod enraged the tidings heard: again
 The prison he commanded to be searched
 In every part: yet Peter was not found.
 The guards were questioned; but unable they
 To satisfy the king's revengeful mind,
 With one fell swoop he sentenced all to die.
 Then from Judea—hurrying away—
 He went to Cæsarea, where he dwelt.

Of his vast crimes the measure now was full;
 And vengeance gathered o'er his fated head.
 The Tyrians and Sidonians had incurred
 His high displeasure; who, with one accord,
 Ambassadors deputed to effect
 Due reconciliation. Blastus was gained o'er—
 The Monarch's chamberlain—whose charge it was
 To afford subsistence to their native land.
 Through his all-ruling influence Herod deigned
 The Ambassadors to hear: in purple clad,
 Seated sublime upon a gorgeous throne,
 The Prætor's diadem glittering on his brows,

Brother of the Lord. The common opinion is, that he is the same as is elsewhere styled the son of Alpheus. Peter, probably, left them to conceal himself elsewhere. He soon after quitted Jerusalem, and went to Rome, leaving Evodius as his successor at Antioch. The translation of the see from Antioch to Rome, took place about ten years after the ascension of Christ.

And in his hands the sparkling sceptre grasped,
 He suffered them to approach—to stoop—to kneel—
 In his most pompous presence: then he spake;
 And as he spake, loud acclamations rang
 From the applauding people: “’Tis a god!”
 They blasphemously cried—“and not a man,
 Whose voice we hear!” With vain complacency
 The tyrant’s heart the adulation drank,
 Idolatrous and mean. But in the midst
 Of this luxurious pageant, he was dashed—
 Struck by the angel—from his mighty throne:
 Worms fed upon that body, which before,
 In pampered majesty and glittering robes,
 Appeared a deity. He groaned, and died. (1)

The blood he shed now fertilized the Church.
 God’s word increased and multiplied the more.
 And Barnabas and Saul—their duty done—
 With John associated, surnamed Mark,
 Quitting Jerusalem to Antioch came.

Now, in the Church which was at Antioch, (2)
 Prophets and doctors dwelt: of these, the chief
 Were Barnabas, and Simon, Niger styled,
 And Lucius of Cyrene, Manhahen,
 The Tetrarch Herod’s foster-brother, and
 Last, but yet greatest, Saul. While fasting these

(1) Mortals! humble yourselves before the majesty of God: for
 no matter who you may be—princes, monarchs, heroes—you must
 die; and your bodies must become the food of worms!

(2) Chap. xiii.

And duly ministering to the Lord,
 The Holy Spirit spake to them, and said :
 "Saul separate to me, and Barnabas,
 For the great work whereunto they are called." (1)

Mid prayer and fasting, on these chosen men
 They laid their hands, and let them go their way.
 Led by the Holy Spirit, they depart
 First to Seleucia, and thence they sailed
 For Cyprus ; Salamina having reached,

(1) *Prophets*, who spoke by inspiration, and foretold the future, like Agabus. *Doctors*, who explained the sacred Scripturea. This title has been retained, with its original office, in the Greek Church. The minister charged with the explication of the gospels, is called *the doctor of the gospel* : he who explains the epistles of St. Paul, *the doctor of the apostle*, &c. &c. &c.

They were performing the *liturgy*, as the original text expresses it ; that is, literally, the *public action*, and, in its general acceptation, divine service. The Greeks employed it to signify the *sacrifice* ; and many interpreters understand it here in this sense : *Λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν*, &c.

Ordination was conferred with prayer and fasting : a practice which commenced with the Church, and has been perpetuated to our times.

But was this an ordination, or a mere deprecatory imposition of hands ? Doctors differ. It is more probable that it was an ordination. Nothing was wanting—prayer, fasting, sacrifice, and imposition of hands. But it may be said, that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, declares that he had received nothing from men. True, with regard to his knowledge of religion and vocation to the apostolate ; and still he received baptism from Ananias ; and he could not receive the presbyteral or episcopal order, except by the ordinary ministry. Just as a priest, who, if raised to the papacy, receives nothing, as *sovereign pontiff*, from the bishop who consecrates him. He is made bishop by him, but supreme pastor in consequence of the order which God has established in his Church.

In all the synagogues the word they taught,
 Assisted in their ministry by John.
 They traversed all the island, and arrived
 At Paphos, where they met a certain Jew—
 A famed magician and false prophet—called
 Bar-Jesu ; who with Sergius Paulus dwelt—
 A wise Proconsul, and illustrious man. (1)
 This Roman officer desired to hear
 The word of God : for Barnabas and Saul
 To learn the truth, ingenuous, he sent.
 But Elymas withstood them, with the hope (2)
 That he might turn, by sophistry, the mind
 Of Sergius from the truth : but Saul—replete
 With wisdom, and with inspiration glowing—
 Rived the magician with his lightning-gaze
 And language charged with thunder : “ Full of guile
 Child of the Devil, enemy of truth,
 Hater of justice ! seeking to pervert
 The righteous ways of God. And now, behold,
 The Lord’s dread hand is on thee : for a time
 Thou shalt not see the beauteous light of heaven—
 Thou shalt be blind ! ” And suddenly a veil

(1) This was moral wisdom, which did not merit faith, but removed all obstacles to its reception. It is the grace of God that renders man faithful : it is by his own folly that man ceases to be so.

(2) “ Elymas, the magician,” (for so it is interpreted,) are the words of the text. Commentators are embarrassed by them ; for neither in Greek nor Hebrew does Elymas signify a magician and yet St. Luke affirms it does. It must have been a word of a language which has not come down to us ; perhaps the ancient language of Cyprus, before the Greek was introduced into that island.

Of mist and darkness o'er his vision spread :
 Amid the gloom he staggered, and besought
 Some pitying hand to guide him on his way.
 Heaven's mighty finger in this deed appeared :
 The words of Saul were stamped with its assent.
 Sergius admired the doctrine he proclaimed,
 And stooped submissive to the yoke of faith. (1)

From Paphos Paul, with his companions, sailed
 To Perge, in Pamphylia : but John,
 Shrinking, discouraged, from so vast a charge—
 A mission fraught with peril and with pain—
 Withdrew from them, and to Jerusalem,
 His native place, returned. They, having passed
 Through Perge, reckless of fatigue, arrived
 At Antioch of Pisidia ; where, on
 The sabbath-day, the synagogue they sought,
 And sat them down among the assembled Jews.
 The law and prophets being duly read,
 The Rulers ('twas the usage thus to act
 Towards strangers) sending to them, "Brethren,"
 said,

(1) After the conversion of the Proconsul, Saul is always styled Paul. Perhaps he adopted it as less objectionable to the Gentiles, with whom he had to treat ; or, perhaps, he assumed the name of the Proconsul ; or, finally, perhaps, from their resemblance, the Gentiles confounded the two names. The apostle, it is certain, adopted the name, and calls himself by no other.

Sergius admired and embraced the true doctrine. The evangelical doctrine, simply expounded, appears, at first sight, sublime in its mysteries, and perfect in its morals. If there was any doubt of the divinity of its origin, the miracle wrought in his presence put this at rest.

"If to the people ye have any word
To make of exhortation, ye can speak."

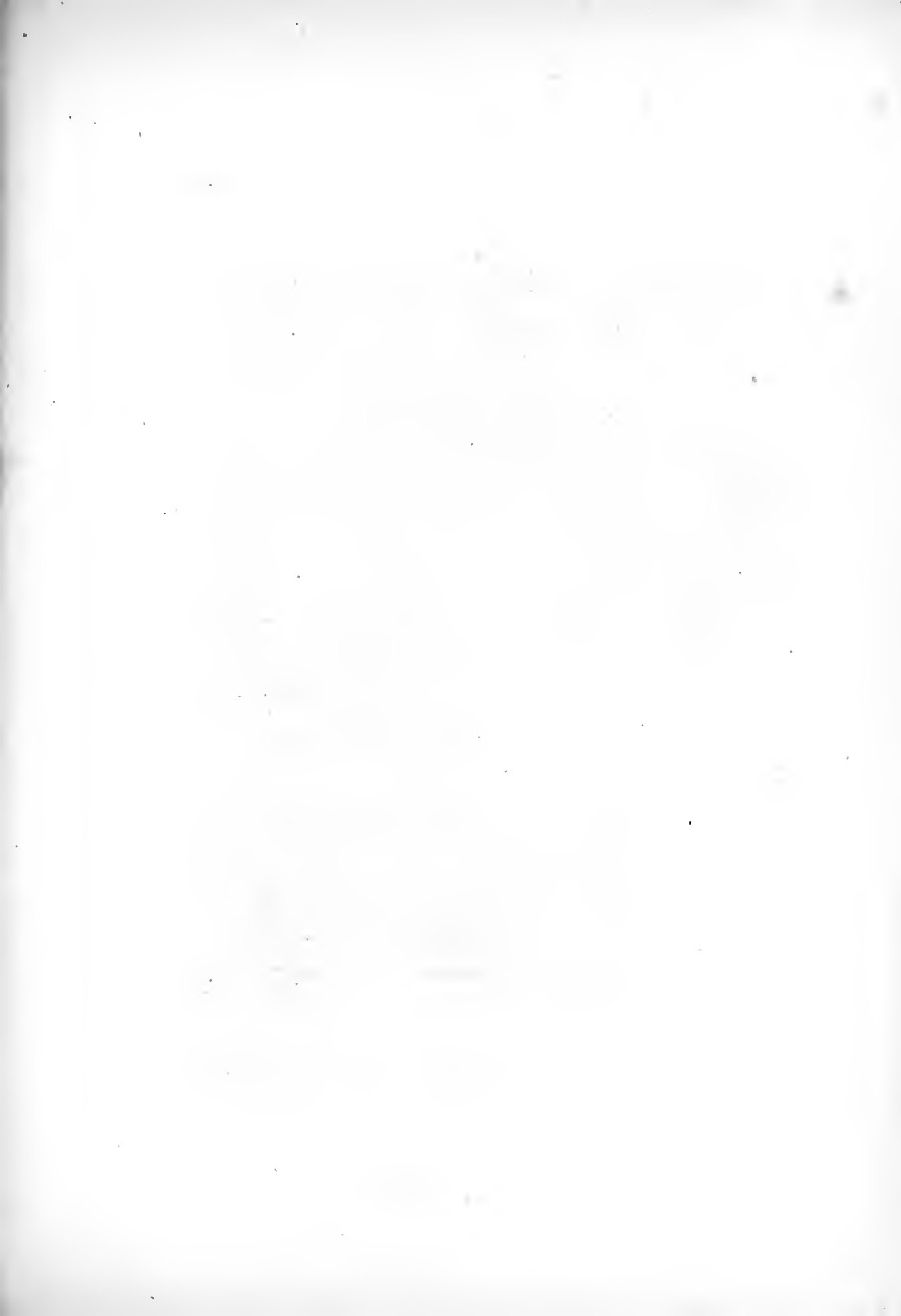
Then Paul arose ; and, with uplifted palm,
Beckoning for silence, solemnly began :
"Israelites, and ye who fear the Lord, (1)
Give ear : the God of Israel's people chose
Our fathers, and their race exalted high, (2)
Whilst they sojourned in Egypt ; from whose land
He led them forth by His almighty arm.
During the space of forty years he bore,
Amid the desert, with their evil ways.
In Chanaan seven nations he destroyed,
And then by lot divided their rich land.
Four hundred years and fifty being past, (3)
He gave unto them Judges, till the days
Of Samuel the Prophet : after which
A king they longed for ; and, as king, he gave
The son of Cis, named Saul, descended from
The tribe of Benjamin, who swayed the land (4)
For forty years. And when he was removed,

(1) Besides those who were Jews or Israelites by birth, others were admitted into the synagogues—such as proselytes and Gentiles, who adored the true God ; and these are designated by the words : *and ye who fear God*.

(2) He exalted the people, and rendered them renowned by the seven plagues with which he visited their cruel oppressors.

(3) The number of years from the birth of Isaac to the division of the land of Chanaan, was about four hundred and fifty. This is the epoch which, interpreters generally agree, St. Paul had in view.

(4) These forty years include the time from the judgeship of Samuel to the reign of Saul.





Joseph's Daughters



Death of Goliath.

God raised up David to the regal throne,
 Of whom this testimony was pronounced :
David, the son of Jesse, I have found
A virtuous man, according to my heart,
Who faithfully my wishes will perform.
 Of this man's seed, as promised, there hath sprung
 To Israel a Saviour—who is Jesus.
 Ere He appeared, John preached to Israel
 The baptism of repentance, and declared,
 When finishing his course: 'I am not He
 Whom ye mistake me for: lo! there will **come**
 One after me, the sandals of whose feet
 I am not worthy even to untie.' (1)

"Descendants of the stock of Abraham,
 Brethren, and all among you who fear God,
 To you the word of life is now addressed :
 For by the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
 And by their Rulers, he was not received :
 They knew him not, nor yet the Prophet's words
 Regarded, which, on every sabbath-day,
 Are read ; and which—condemning him to death—

(1) Many years after the death of John the Baptist, and far from Judea, St. Paul cites his testimony, as proving the divinity of Jesus Christ. This shows how great was the renown of the holy precursor, and the esteem in which he was held by the Jews in all parts of the world. St. John the Evangelist also cites him in his gospel, which he wrote more than fifty years after the death of the Precursor ; which shows how profoundly his memory was venerated. All this added, no doubt, great weight to his testimony. But he proved it, likewise, from the prophecies ; for it was predicted that the Messiah should be preceded by a prophet, who should prepare his ways.

Unconscious they and ignorant fulfilled ;
 And though no cause of death in him they found,
 They called on Pilate for his blood. He died :
 And all things which were written being done,
 They took his mangled body from the tree,
 And laid it in the tomb. But from the dead
 God, on the third day, raised him up again ;
 And during many days, by those who came
 Together with him to Jerusalem,
 From Galilee, was he distinctly seen,
 Who to the people are his witnesses
 E'en to this present hour. The promise made
 To our forefathers we declare to you
 Hath now among our children been fulfilled.
 For God hath raised up Jesus in their midst,
 As it is written in the second Psalm :
Thou art my Son—I have begotten thee. (1)

(1) St. Paul (Hcb. i. 5) explains this passage of the eternal generation of the Word. It is, in fact, the natural and literal sense. Here he applies it to the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and it is explained in several ways. 1. As the manifestation of the eternal generation ; because, in raising up his Son, God seems to have said to the whole universe : This is my Son, whom I have begotten from all eternity ; acknowledge him, by virtue of this prodigy. 2. Others understand it of the resurrection itself, which is often called regeneration in the Scriptures ; making the words, *this day have I begotten thee*, signify, this day have I regenerated thee, having given thee a new birth. 3. In preserving the principal meaning of the passage, which is that of the eternal generation, many have explained it as referring to the incarnation and resurrection—thus : by the personal union of the Word with the human nature, a man has been made the Son of God. In this sense, God can say to man : *Thou art my Son, &c.* This man did not any longer exist after the death of Jesus, (although the

And that he raised him, never more to die,
 He hath borne witness in these well-known words :
The promise made to David I will keep.
 And, therefore, in another place, 'tis sung :
Thou shalt not give thy holy One to see
Corruption. Of these splendid promises
 The object was not David, but his Lord,
 Messiah, Son of God. For, having served,
 During his generation, God's high will,
 The Patriarch slept, and, with his fathers laid,
 Beheld corruption. But whom God hath raised
 Corruption He saw not. Then, be it known,
 Brethren, to all, that through His holy name
 Is preached to you remission of your sins ;
 And in all things in which, by Moses' law,
 Ye were not justified, if ye believe,
 Justification may ye now obtain.
 Therefore, beware, lest on your guilty heads
 The menace, spoken in the Prophets, fall :
Behold, despisers ! wonder, and be struck
With awe ; for, in your days, a work I work,
Which, when you hear it, no one will believe." (1)

Word continued united with him,) and there was no more a man who could be called the natural son of God. But this man being re-made, if this term may be allowed, by the re-union of the parts, a man again existed to whom God might say on the day of his resurrection, as well as of his incarnation : *Thou art my son, &c.* St. Paul seems to have united the two significations in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, where, after representing him as of the seed of David, he declares that he was preordained *to be the son of God, &c.* (Rom. i. 3-4.)

(1) The work he speaks of is mentioned in Habacuc, i. 5 : it is the irruption of the Chaldeans into the land of promise, and the

Unworthy life eternal. Therefore, now
 Will we turn from you to the Gentiles ; since
 The Lord hath thus commanded : *Thou shalt be*
Set as a light unto the nations far,
That to the utmost boundaries of the earth
Salvation thou mayest bring." The Gentiles heard
 The tidings, and were glad ; and to God's word
 Due glory rendered : all who were ordained (1)
 To everlasting life embraced the faith :
 The gospel then throughout that country spread.

These triumphs filled the Hebrews with dismay.
 Worst in argument, to conquer still
 They struggled, by cabal and artifice.
 To the weak fears of women they appealed—
 Of high condition, and religious lives,
 But dupes sincere to hypocritical arts.
 Their ancient prejudices they stirred up ;
 And through their influence the leading men
 And Rulers of the city were impelled
 'Gainst Paul and Barnabas to form a league,
 And drive them violently from their coasts.

(1) The Greek word signifies simply *destined*, (*ἑταρτυμένοι*.) Interpreters generally do not understand by it *predestination*, strictly taken : they are slow to believe that St. Luke had been inspired to inform these men that they were *predestined* ; especially, as it was probable that others, who did not immediately embrace the faith, might have done so afterwards, as it is said that the gospel *spread throughout that whole country*. They were the pre-ordained (*pre-ordinati*) to the dispositions requisite for the faith, which consists principally in the sincere love of truth, joined to the desire to embrace it.

From off their feet the Apostles shook the dust,
And for Iconium bent their way. Meanwhile,
With grace and joy were the disciples filled. (1)

(1) They acted in conformity with the injunction of Christ, (Matt. x. 14.) Thus, by a headstrong disposition in matters of religion, these women, otherwise regular and devout, were the cause of the light of truth being removed from their city, and extinguished for ever.

BOOK THIRD.⁽¹⁾

CONTENTS:

Jews and Gentiles converted at Iconium—The lame man cured at Lystra—The two Apostles taken for Gods—The next day Paul is stoned—He returns to Antioch with Barnabas—Dispute on Circumcision—Paul and Barnabas go to consult the Apostles—Council of Jerusalem—Separation of Paul and Barnabas—Timothy circumcised—The Holy Ghost forbids Paul to preach in Asia and Bythinia—He is called to Macedonia—The possessed woman delivered—Paul and Silas scourged, imprisoned, and sent away—Preaching at Thessalonica—Resurrection caused by the Jews—St. Paul at Athens—His discourse in the Areopagus—Conversion of Dionysius—Paul preaches at Corinth and Ephesus—Apollo—Baptism of John insufficient—Miracles wrought by the garments of Paul—Jewish Exorcists maltreated by the Devil—Books burned—Sedition excited by the copper-smith, Demetrius—Paul at Troas—The young man who fell from the window, restored to life by him—At Miletus, his discourse to the Pastors of the Church.

AGAIN, naught daunted, in the synagogue (2)
The two apostles, at Iconium,
Made their appearance ; and with so much force
And efficacy spoke, that numbers joined—
Both Jews and Greeks—their standard : but, mean-
while,
The unbelieving Hebrews sought to rouse (3)

(1) From the fourteenth to the twentieth chapter, inclusively.

(2) Chap. xiv.

(3) The Jews, who were the first persecutors of Christianity, were also the instigators and authors of the first persecutions it experienced on the part of the Gentiles. Already guilty of the blood of the prophets, from Abel to Jesus Christ, they found out the secret of making themselves guilty of the blood of all the martyrs, from Christ down to the end of the persecutions.

How could they excite the Gentiles against this religion, if not

The Gentiles' minds, and their revenge incense,
 Against the brethren. Yet, despite their hate,
 For no short period did they tarry there,
 Confiding in the power of the Lord—
 Who rendered testimony, by the signs
 And wonders they effected, to His word.
 The city was divided: with the Jews
 A part, and part with the Apostles held.
 The Gentiles with the Jewish rulers joined,
 To use them contumeliously, and stone.
 But they to Lystra and to Derbe fled—
 Cities of Lycaonia—and passed
 Through the surrounding country, preaching Christ.

There was a man at Lystra—known to all—
 Whose feet were impotent, and who ne'er had walked;
 A cripple even from his mother's womb.
 While Paul was preaching, he attentive heard
 Amid the multitude. The apostle saw,
 And felt compassionate; for he had faith (1)
 Sufficent to be healed. With a loud voice,
 Paul spake to him: "Stand upright on thy feet!"
 He started from the ground, leaped up, and walked.

The astonished multitudes, when they beheld

by assuring them that it tended to the destruction of their temples and idols? Thus men, the most opposed to idolatry, become its supporters. Are there not persons professing to be Christians, who would rather see Mahommedanism prevail than Catholicism?

(1) St. Paul read the attention of this man in his eyes, and, by prophetic light, saw that he had faith, and a firm confidence, likewise, in the power of the Apostle to cure him.

This wonder wrought by Paul, their voices raised,
 Crying in their own Lycaonian tongue :
 " The Gods are with us in the shape of men !"
 Jove they styled Barnabas : but Mercury, Paul,
 Because he spoke with eloquence divine.
 The Priest of Jupiter—whose statue stood
 Near to the city—came before the gate,
 Bringing young heifers with green garlands crowned,
 To sacrifice to them, as to the Gods.

Which, when the apostles heard, their robes they
 rent,
 And sallying out among the crowd, exclaimed : (1)
 " What, men of Lystra ! are ye doing ? We,
 Like to yourselves, are mortals. These vain things (2)
 Must ye forsake, and serve the living God ;
 By whose almighty power the heavens, the earth,
 The deep, and all that they contain, were made.
 Who, in past ages, let the nations walk (3)

(1) Simply to refuse divine honors might have been the effect of merely ordinary virtue in the ministers of the gospel. But the heroism of the apostles is here evinced by their rending their garments, rushing out into the midst of the crowd, and their cry of indignation and grief at the conduct of the people.

If, instead of sacrificing to them, the people had exclaimed : *These are Gods, and not men !* this flattery would have excited in their breasts an equal indignation. It is no difficult matter to believe that we are neither Mercury nor Jupiter : is it easy to be convinced that the world is deceived when it says that we have spoken *divinely* ? Preachers of the word of God ! humility is your first virtue.

(2) Imaginary deities.

(3) God left them to the corruption of their hearts, and suffered them to adore deities as vicious as themselves. I say, *suffered*.

In their own paths of darkness : of Himself
 Still showing testimony ; from the skies
 Scattering His blessings ; giving genial rains
 And fruitful seasons, yielding copious food,
 And with all gladness filling every heart."

As shift the winds, so change the people's minds :
 But ne'er more fitful to caprice was turned
 What seemed conviction solidly confirmed,
 Than suddenly at Lystra. While the priest
 In solemn pageantry, amidst a crowd
 Applauding, stood to sacrifice prepared,
 It chanced that from Iconium arrived
 Some Hebrews, and from Antioch ; who stirred up,
 By heinous calumnies, their fellow Jews
 To mutiny and vengeance. Paul they seized,
 And stoned him in their fury ; and, as dead, (1)

because he did not usher upon them the full day of the gospel. Nevertheless, they were not without light ; and the works of creation were sufficient to make them know the Creator. This is signified in the words of St. Paul to the Romans (chap. i.) : *They were inexcusable.*

(1) Was he really dead, and restored to life ? At all events, he was miraculously cured of his wounds ; otherwise it would have required much more time than one day to recover from them so as to be able to travel.

It was at this epoch, according to the most exact chronology, that St. Paul was caught up to the third heaven. Perhaps this might have occurred during the time he was reputed dead. There is, however, one difficulty ; for he says, in his epistles, that whether he was *in his body or out of it*, he knew not. Now, his disciples, who surrounded him at the time he revived, might have cleared up this doubt by informing him whether or not his *body* had *disappeared*.

His body dragged without the city-walls.
But, as around him his disciples wept,
He rose unhurt, and to the city back
Intrepidly returned ; whence, the next day,
With Barnabas, for Derbe he set out.

The tidings of the gospel having preached
Throughout that city, these heroic men,
Whom suffering and peril nerved the more,
To Lystra and Iconium returned,
And e'en to Antioch, there to animate
The faithful, and with fortitude inspire ;
This fundamental maxim on their heart
Impressing deeply : *To heaven's blissful realms,
Through many tribulations we must pass.*
For all the Churches priests were then ordained
By Paul, who, fasting, with them offered prayer ;
And to the Lord, in whom they had believed,
Commended them with fervor. Then they passed
Throughout Pisidia, and, unwearied, came
Into Pamphylia, where the word of God
At Perge they proclaimed, and then went down
Into Attalia : whence they sailed once more
For Antioch, from which they had been sent,
Intrusted to the auspicious grace of God,
To do the work so gloriously fulfilled.
There having safely landed, they convoked
The Church rejoicing, and the wondrous things
Recounted which the Lord, through them, had
done : (1)

(1) That is to say, through their ministry. St. Paul has said

How he had opened to the Gentile race
The portals of the faith. And no short time
With the disciples calmly they abode.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, the Lord hath
said, (1)

*High as the heavens above the earth expand,
So are my thoughts exalted over yours. (2)*
Behold the mystery which the human mind
Can understand not! Rather than submit
Their thoughts to Heaven's, mortals dare reject,
Rebelligiously, the latter. From this source
Springs incredulity: or, bringing down
God's ways sublime to their low thoughts, they form
A union temerarious, which gives birth
To error and to heresy. The Jews,
To Christians changed, with passionate regard,
Cleaved to the memory of the ancient law:
Hence, with the gospel they began to blend
The forms of Judaism. Soon after, rose
Philosophers, who, on the tree of Truth,
Attempted to engraft Platonic shoots.
Among the former, several coming down
To Antioch from Judea, falsely taught:
"Brethren, unless according to the rite

in the same sense: *It is not I, but the grace of God with me*
(1 Cor. xv. 10.)

(1) Chap. xv.

(2) Non enim cogitationes meæ cogitationes vestræ: neque viæ vestræ, viæ meæ, dicit Dominus. Quia sicut exaltantur cœli a terra, sic exaltatæ sunt viæ meæ a viis vestris, et cogitationes meæ a cogitationibus vestris. (Isa. lv. 8, 9.)

And law of Moses, ye be circumcised,
Eternal life ye never can attain."

Against this error Paul and Barnabas,
With strenuous zeal, contended. 'Twas resolved,
That they, and others of the other side,
Should go up to Jerusalem, and submit
The question to the Apostles and the Priests. (1)

They start from Antioch, accompanied,
Some distance, by the brethren, on their way.
Through Samaria and Phœnicia
They passed; relating how the Gentiles had
Received the faith;—which caused great joy to all.

They reached Jerusalem, where, with applause,
The Church saluted them. The Apostles, Priests,
And all came out to meet them: and they told
What mighty things through them the Lord had
wrought.

But some there were belonging to the sect
Of Pharisees, who had embraced the faith,
(They thus made known the question to be solved,)
Who held that circumcision, and the law
Of Moses, in the Church must be enforced.

(1) Another reason induced St. Paul to make this journey, as he informs us in his Epistle to the Galatians, (ii. 2.) *And I went up according to revelation (with Barnabas and Titus) and conferred with them in the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles: but apart with them who seemed to be something, lest perhaps I should run, or had run in vain.*

This doctrine, is it true, or is it false ?—
Decision must be given, and doubt expelled.

Wherefore, the Apostles and the Aneients met,
This matter, fraught with interest, to diseuss.
Much disputation rose, and grave debate ;
When Peter thus addressed them : (1) " Brethren,
hear :

The Lord, you know, made choice, in former days,
Of me, among your number, to proclaim
His gospel to the Gentiles : and they heard. (2)
And God, who knows the seerets of their hearts,
Gave testimony, sending down on them,
As formerly on us, the Holy Ghost. (3)
No difference between them and us was made.
Their hearts renewed were purified by faith.
Why, therefore, tempt ye God ; to lay a yoke (4)

(1) Here again we find Peter standing pre-eminent among the Apostles. After hearing all the arguments and debate which, for a considerable time, excited the council without producing any positive conclusion, he, holding the first place, (as his successors, the Pontiffs, still do in the Ecumenical Councils,) spoke in terms which *decided* the controversy. "*Tu es Petrus,*" &c., strikes us forcibly here.

(2) Cornelius and his household, as we have seen above.

(3) The testimony, of which mention is here made, does not refer directly to the truths which Peter announced, but in the justification of the Gentiles. The Holy Ghost, by descending on them in a sensible manner, proved that they were actually holy, uncircumcised though they were. Therefore, neither circumcision nor Judaism was necessary for sanctity, or salvation, which is the fruit of it.

(4) To tempt God, is to exact or expect useless and superfluous miracles. Christ himself uses the term in this sense, (Matt. iv.)

On the disciples, which our Sires and we
 Found insupportable? As we are saved,
 So are they, likewise, by the grace of Christ,
 Not by the observance of the ancient law."

Deep silence through the council now prevailed,—
 When Peter ceased. Next Barnabas and Paul
 Were listened to, with breathless interest,
 While they narrated what prodigious signs
 Among the Gentiles God, through them, had done.

When they had finished, James arose, and said:
 "Men, brethren, hear my voice: Simon hath told
 How from the Gentiles God a people drew,
 Devoted to his name. With this accords
 The language of the Prophets, who thus sing:
Then shall I come, and then build up again (1)
The tabernacle of David—from its ruins

Those to whom St. Peter here addresses the word, were in this case: for God having sufficiently declared his will by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit, to demand new proofs, was to demand a new miracle, which would be superfluous.

The *impossibility* to bear that yoke, signifies that it was *difficult* to bear it. God rendered testimony to many who submitted to it—such as Zachary and Elizabeth, of whom it is written, that they were both just: *observing all the commandments and all the ordinances of the Lord, &c.* (Luke, ii.)

St. Augustine proves, against Pelagius, that all the just, under both laws, are saved only through the grace of Christ. This dogma is certain, and of faith.

(1) By *the tabernacle of David*, is understood the incredulous portion of the Jewish people: by *the residue*, is meant those Jews who were converted, to whom the Gentiles will be added. God will form a new house of David—that is, a new people of God—

*It shall arise . . . the residue of men,
And all the nations upon whom my name
Shall be invoked, may seek and find the Lord."*

Peter had given decision : Barnabas
And Paul sustained it by their strong support ;
To which, drawn from prophetic oracles,
James adds another and convincing proof.
What now remains but clearly to conclude ?
This charge on James devolved, who thus resumed :

"From all which reasons ye have heard, I judge,
That to the Gentiles, who the faith adopt, (1)
Be given no disquietude or fears :
But we should write unto them to refrain
From fornication, from polluted meats, (2)
From strangled animals, and from all blood." (3)

of which the Messiah, the Son of God, will be the eternal King.
The prophecy is from Amos, ix. 11.

(1) The prophecy does not express the vocation of the Gentiles. The apostle concludes from it, that the Gentiles, converted, will not be subject to the yoke of the Mosaic law. We do not, at first sight, perceive the connection between the promises and the consequences. But, if we reflect a little, we will see it. All nations shall be called. Then circumcision will be abolished : for it was instituted to distinguish from all other nations the people which God had chosen as his own. Now, by the vocation of the Gentiles, the people of God must be formed from all the people of the earth : all distinction becomes superfluous, and, consequently, circumcision—the abolition of which included that of all Judaism.

(2) The Gentiles did not regard fornication as a crime. It was feared that this notion might be introduced into Christianity.

(3) Meats contaminated by their having been offered in sacrifice to the idols.

The Jews no caution on these heads required ;
 For from the olden times, in every town,
 Moses provided, in the synagogues,
 Teachers to read him every sabbath-day.

The Apostles, Ancients, and the Church entire, (1)
 Resolved from their own company to choose
 Wise men and good, with Paul and Barnabas
 To visit Antioch, and their letters bear :
 Silas, and Judas, surnamed Barsabas,
 Among the brethren venerable chiefs.
 Through them the council spake, and thus decreed •
 “The Apostles and the Ancients of the Church, (2)

(1) The *entire* Church might take part in the choice of denunciations, but not in the *decision*. Others were associated with Paul and Barnabas, in order the better to satisfy the Christians at Antioch ; for they would be considered disinterested witnesses.

(2) *Ancients*, or *priests*—*οἱ πρεσβύτεροι* : the Greek word signifying both ; and in the Vulgate both are used ; which gives room to believe that they are the same. We know that, in the primitive times, the name of bishop and priest was given indifferently to bishops and priests. There is some appearance, that the great superiority of the apostolic order over all the inferior dignities, made them seem almost equal. After there were no more apostles, the bishops assumed their places as chiefs of the people, and priests properly called.

Some translate the “ancients *and* the brethren.” The brethren, thus distinguished from the ancients, could have been only the simple faithful, who appeared to concur with the apostles and priests in a decree, which is at once dogmatic and legislative. We can easily imagine what would be the consequence if democracy were introduced into the ecclesiastical government. The translation of the Vulgate must, therefore, be retained. It is true, that in Greek the verse generally runs : the ancients *and* brethren ; but we read, likewise, in very ancient Greek MSS., as in the Vulgate the ancients *among* the brethren : in Latin, *Seniores fratrum*.

To all their Gentile brethren of the faith
 Who are at Antioch, in Syria,
 And in Cilicia, greeting: having heard
 That some, departing from us, have disturbed,
 With useless words, your minds, subverting souls,
 To whom we never such commandment gave,
 It hath seemed good to us, assembled here,
 To choose out men, whom, with our much-loved Paul
 And Barnabas, we send unto you ;—men
 Who, for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 Their lives have perilled: we have, therefore, sent
 Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell,
 By word of mouth, the things that we now write.
 For to the HOLY SPIRIT, and to us, (1)
 It hath seemed good to lay upon your necks

It has long since been discovered, that the more ancient the Greek MSS. the more they are conformable with the Vulgate.

It is generally believed that the letter was written by St. James and it is remarkable that he is the only one among the apostles who, in his canonical epistle, as well as in this, uses the term, *greeting*, (*salutem*.)

(1) *And to us*. This signifies, that the apostles were not only the organs of the Holy Ghost, but they judged with him, and like him. In a word, that the Holy Ghost *presided* over the assembly, and the apostles were the members of it. Such is the rank to which God raises his ministers, and such the power he communicates to them.

All this is in virtue of the promises made to the Church, represented by this first council. The same Spirit will preside over all the Ecumenical Councils to the end of the world.

Of these four prohibitions, one continues to be, and must always be, enforced: viz. fornication. The law proscribing it is the divine law: and some theologians are of opinion, with St. Thomas, it is the natural law. The others are abolished. They were founded upon a wise condescension to the weakness of the Jews, many

No farther burden than the essential one.
 These things are necessary : to abstain
 From meats to idols sacrificed, from blood,
 From fornication, and from strangled things.
 Observing these, ye shall do well. Adieu."

The venerable deputies, dismissed,
 Went down to Antioch ; and, without delay,
 Together gathering the multitude
 Of brethren, placed the epistle in their hands.
 Which being read, the Church with joy was filled,
 Seeing the consolation it inspired.
 Judas and Silas, in convincing terms,
 For they were prophets, too, the saints addressed,
 Strengthening their souls, and comforting their hearts.

Their task was done : and they to whom they
 brought

of whom would not consent to unite themselves with the Gentiles if they had been permitted to use meats which the law had taught them to consider as abominable. A stronger reason existed with regard to meats offered to idols. To eat of the victim as victim, (*quasi idolothytum*, 1 Cor. viii. 7,) was to participate in the sacrifice. It is true, that all might not have had this bad intention, but it was apprehended that first notions, which are seldom entirely effaced, might be re-awakened in many Gentiles ; and that by eating these meats, they might still imagine that they were performing an act of religion. These laws ceased when the causes that established them no longer existed. The Latin Church observed them during several centuries ; the Greek Church observes them to the present day.

It is by tradition we have learned that they were not intended to be perpetual. Should not those who reject tradition feel themselves obliged to observe them ?

The peace of unity, dismissed them back
 To those who sent them. But at Antioch
 Silas remained ; and to Jerusalem
 Judas alone departed. There, too, Paul
 With Barnabas continued : and they preached,

With others, zealously, the word of God.
 But now a strong solicitude awoke—
 For all the Churches—in the breast of Paul :
 “ Let us return,” to Barnabas he said,
 “ And visit all our brethren in the towns
 Wherein we have preached, and witness how they do.”

And Barnabas agreed : but when with them
 He would have added John, too, surnamed Mark,
 Paul firmly urged he might not be received :
 (For he had left them in Pamphylia,
 Unequal to the work)—dissension rose (1)

(1) The saints always desire what God desires ; but they are not always certain of his will. Then their attachment to their own impressions is not blamable, because they sincerely believe that they are acting according to that will.

The guardian angel of Persia resisted, during twenty-one years, the angel that spoke to Daniel, (Dan. x.) There was dissension among angels, but it did not create a division of hearts.

The Apostles, in this case, were persuaded that what they thought was according to God and reason, and, therefore, neither would yield. God, who had revealed so many things to them, left them in ignorance as to who was or was not deceived. He knew that this ignorance would occasion their separation, and this separation would tend to the still wider dissemination of the gospel. To judge by the result, both acted properly. The meekness of Barnabas would not exclude Mark from the ministry ; and the severity of Paul produced in him such an increase of fervor, that he was,

Between the apostles ; so that they resolved
 One from the other to depart : with Mark
 For Cyprus, Barnabas, indeed, set sail ;
 Paul, choosing Silas, to the grace of God
 Delivered, by the brethren, went in peace.
 Through Syria and Cilicia he passed,
 Strengthening the churches, ordering them to obey
 The precepts of the Apostles and the Priests.

The rites of Judaism had ceased to bind, (1)
 But were not quite destroyed : they might be kept,
 Or set aside, as each one should prefer.
 A higher rule—and not their fantasies—
 Guided the Apostles :—that of charity—
 Whether the ordinances of the Law
 They caused to be rejected or observed.
 To all they labored to adapt their means
 Legitimate, to Gentile and to Jew,
 To gain all over to the faith of Christ.
 To Derbe and to Lystra Paul departs.
 There a disciple dwelt, named Timothy,
 Of whom all Lystra and Iconium gave
 Good testimony. Now, he was the son
 Of a believing Jewish mother, and
 A Gentile father : him Paul circumcised,
 And took along ; for to the Jews 'twas known,

afterwards, again associated with the Apostle of the Nations, and
 merited his praises. He arrived, at length, to so great a degree
 of sanctity, that many prodigies were wrought by him, as we find
 recorded in the Roman Martyrology, *27th of September*.

(1) Chap. xvi.

That ne was of a Gentile father born.
 And as through all the neighboring towns they passed,
 They taught the faithful the decrees to keep
 Framed by the Ancients at Jerusalem.
 Thus in their faith the Churches were confi:med.
 And from the rigor of the ancient yoke
 Redeemed, their numbers, every day, increased.

When they had traversed Phrygia, and all
 The country of Galatia, they received
 A warning from the Spirit, not to preach
 The word of God in Asia. Passing, then,
 Into the land of Mysia, with the intent
 To go into Bethania, they were checked.
 The Spirit of Jesus bade them enter not. (1)
 Thus they went down to Troas; where, at night,
 Paul had a vision. He beheld a man—
 A Macedonian—who stood near, and said:
 “Pass over into Macedonia,
 And give us succor.” We, forthwith, resolved

(1) What could have been the reason of this prohibition? St. Chrysostom answers, that it was merely for a time: God had deferred the conversion of these people to a more suitable period. Or, perhaps, it was only personal, referring to St. Paul; because God had reserved the apostleship of Bithynia for St. Peter, and that of Asia for St. John: although St. Paul preached there at another time. For what is here styled Asia, is only a particular province of it, of which Ephesus was the capital. *God wishes all men to be saved, and that they come to the knowledge of the truth.* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

The “Spirit of Jesus” is the Holy Spirit, which is no less the Spirit of the Son than of the Father. This text serves to prove that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

Thither our course to turn, assured that God
 Had destined us to preach the word to them. (1)
 Sailing from Troas, in a course direct,
 To Samothracia, we reached, next day,
 Neapolis; and thence Philippi made,
 Which, chief of Macedonian towns, salutes
 The mariner arriving on this coast;—
 A colony.—We, tarrying here some days,
 Conferred together. On the sabbath-morn,
 Without the gate upon the river side
 Where there appeared a gathering to be
 For prayer, we went; and, sitting down, we spake (2)
 To the assembled women. One of these,
 Whose name was Lydia, did attentive hear.
 She purple stuffs from Thyatira sold, (3)
 And worshipped God devoutly. As he spake,
 Her heart was opened to the words of Paul;
 And when she was baptized, and all her house,
 “If you have judged me faithful to the Lord,
 Come and abide beneath my roof,” she said.

We chanced, as on our way to prayer, to meet
 A certain girl—a youthful slave—possessed (4)

(1) *We*. St. Luke here begins to speak in the first person; from which we gather that it was at this juncture that he associated himself to St. Paul.

(2) *Prayer*. The Greek word signifies an oratory. The Jews had them near the cities, especially those where there were synagogues. “Ἐνομιζέτο προσευχὴ εἶναι.”

(3) It is written of Lydia, even before her conversion to Christianity, that she *served God*. It is natural to believe that she was a Jewess or a proselyte.

(4) This spirit was so called from Apollo, who had a famous

By a Pythonic spirit, who procured
 Much profit by divining for her lords.
 She followed Paul and us, crying aloud :
 " These men are servants of the most high God, (1)
 Who come to preach salvation." Many days
 Was this repeated by the wretched girl.
 Paul's heart was pierced with pity, and he grieved ;
 And to the spirit said : " Thee I command,
 In the most sacred name of Jesus Christ,
 To leave her." And that instant he went out. (2)

On candid hearts this wonder must have wrought
 Beneficent effects—others it fired

temple at Delphos, where he issued his oracles through the priestesses of the temple. They were styled *Pythonissæ*, from *Pythius*, the epithet given to Apollo after his victory over the serpent *Pytho*.

(1) It would appear that this exclamation would have aided in the cause of the gospel ; and still St. Paul silences the spirit. We cannot divine all the reasons which induced him to do this. There are two, which will be deemed more than sufficient : the first, the example of Jesus Christ, who imposed silence on the devils that proclaimed his divinity ; the second, because St. Paul was not ignorant of the deep wiles of Satan, who never says the truth except to make it subservient to error, or the execution of perverse designs. We must except such cases where the Almighty makes him speak, in spite of himself.

(2) All general propositions are liable to exceptions. Some eminent writers have pretended that *all* the oracles, without exception, were the delusions of the priests of the temples, and that the devils took no part in them. But the present instance confutes that assertion ; for, it is certain, that the Devil spoke through the organ of this girl. This fact supposes many others of a similar nature, and suffices to overthrow the system of the above-named critics. In the expressive language of M. de Fontenelle, the abbreviator of the Anabaptist physician, Van Dale : *C'est ici*

With furious revenge. Their gain destroyed,
 Her masters seized on Silas and on Paul,
 And to the Rulers in the market-place,
 And Magistrates, presented them, and said:
 "These men our city with disorder fill—
 They being Jews, a fashion fain would preach,
 Which we cannot receive, much less observe,
 As Romans." The excited people ran,
 Tumultuous, against them; and, their clothes
 The Magistrates with violence rending off,
 Condemned them to be scourged. With many stripes
 They were chastised, and into prison cast. (1)
 The jailer, charged to guard with diligence
 The prisoners, thrust them in the deepest cell,—
 Low in the inner dungeon,—and in stocks,
 Still better to secure them, clasped their feet.

The midnight stillness Paul and Silas broke
 By solemn prayer, and hymns of praise to God, (2)

un de ces cas où la moindre exception ruine la proposition générale.

(1) St. Luke makes mention but of this one flagellation of St. Paul. He suffered others. *Thrice*, he writes, *was I beaten with rods. Five times did I receive of the Jews forty stripes, save one.* (2 Cor. xi.) The law forbade the Jews to inflict more than forty stripes. For fear of going beyond this number, they gave but thirty-nine. The Jews made use of leather thongs; the Romans of rods; and, among the latter, no particular number was defined by the law.

(2) It was a common custom among the primitive Christians to rise at midnight to sing the praises of God. If the simple faithful did this, with much greater reason did the Apostles. They had learned this from their divine Master, who passed the nights in prayer. But this custom is traced back to the days of David,

And all the prisoners their voices heard.
When suddenly the earth began to quake,
And the foundations of the prison shook :
The doors flew open ; and the bands were loosed
Wherewith the prisoners had been manacled.

The awe-struck jailer started from his sleep,
And finding open all the prison-doors,
Drew, desperate, his sword, and would have plunged
The blade into his heart ; for all was done
With him, supposing that the prisoners had fled.

Amid the gloom Paul could not have desiered,
By natural means, the action of the guard ;
But Heaven revealed it ; and he cried aloud :
“ Harm not thyself, for all of us are here.”

Then, by the glimmering lantern-light, the guard,
Searching his way, went in, and trembling fell,
In prostrate veneration, at the feet
Of Paul and Silas ; and he led them out :
“ Masters,” imploring them, “ what must I do,
That I, and all my household, may be saved ?”

who declares that he arose at midnight to sing the praises of God (Ps. 98.) It is perpetuated to our times by religious persons of both sexes, who rise at midnight for the *matins*. Still, we must deplore the diminution of fervor in this particular. The Apostles, outraged, scourged, covered with wounds, imprisoned, chained, are as exact in their exercises of piety, as when free and tranquil. What a prodigy of fidelity ! They chanted hymns and canticles under these frightful circumstances. What a prodigy of strength !

"Believe in the Lord Jesus," they returned.
 And then to him, and to his house, they preached
 The word of life : who, that same hour of night,
 Washed their red wounds, and, with his family,
 Believing in the Saviour, was baptized.
 Then to his house he brought them, and spread out
 The table, filled with joy, believing God.

Soon as the day was come, the Magistrates,
 Repenting of their cruelty, despatched
 A band of Lictors to the jailer's house,
 Commanding him to set the prisoners free.
 "Let these men go:" to Paul the keeper bore
 The joyous tidings. "Go, depart in peace :"
 These are the orders of the Magistrates.

But Paul made answer : "They have beaten us,
 With public ignominy, uncondemned,
 Though we are Roman citizens—and dared
 Imprison us ; and will they thrust us, now,
 In secret out ? not so ;—but let them come (1)
 And lead us forth themselves to liberty."

(1) It was not from resentment or pride that St. Paul exacted this satisfaction, but from zeal ; and because he judged that this personal insult, unless effaced, would be identified with the gospel itself in those parts.

Under these circumstances, it was his duty to defend his honor following the counsel of the wise man : *Take care of a good name.* (Ecclesiastes. xli. 15.) However, it is so difficult that human passions should not be mingled in a similar defence, that a virtuous man, not having the lights of St. Paul, would not undertake it without the advice of some prudent director.

The *lictors* marched before the magistrates, carrying hatchets.

This fearless answer to the Magistrates
 The Lictors carried ; who, with terror, learned
 That they were Roman eitizens. In haste
 They went, and soothing them with suppliant words,
 Led them with honor through the prison-gates,
 And urged them from the eity to depart. (1)

Rescued from prison, in the peaceful home
 Of Lydia, Paul and Silas found repose.
 And having seen the brethren, and consoled, (2)
 They left Philippi. With their blood that soil
 Was sprinkled ; whieh, in proper season, teemed
 With blessed and abundant fruits of faith. (3)

Paul, therefore, to Philippi bids farewell, (4)
 With Silas, (for none other followed on :) (5)

enveloped in bundles of rods, which they undid either to scourge or decapitate the victim

(1) In some Greek MSS. the magistrates are made to say : *Go from the city, lest some other excitement be raised against you, and a conspiracy against us.* But this looks more like a commentary than an original text : it shows, however, the reasons which influenced the magistrates to desire them to depart.

(2) The afflicted become consolers ; and they who have received no injury stand in need of consolation ! The unction of grace, in the first, and a dolorous compassion, in the second, produce these two effects. The first was a phenomenon which had been unprecedented—as admirable as any of the miracles which the Apostles performed.

(3) See the Epistle of St. Paul, addressed from his prison, in Rome, to the Philippians.

(4) Chap. xvii.

(5) Not even St. Luke, as we gather from the manner in which he speaks.

And having journeyed through Amphipolis
 And Apollonia, at length they came
 To Thessalonica, in which the Jews
 A synagogue possessed: to this repaired,
 As was his custom, Paul. Three sabbath-days
 He reasoned from the Scriptures, and explained
 The meaning of the prophecies: how CHRIST (1)
 Was sent to suffer, and to rise again:—
 “He whom I preach to you is JESUS CHRIST.”
 Among their number some the faith received,
 Binding themselves to Silas and to Paul.
 Of Gentiles, too, and those that feared the Lord, (2)
 Great multitudes of men, and not a few
 Of noble women, yielded to the truth.

The Jews with envy fired, and rancorous zeal,
 Stirred up the populace. Through wicked men—
 Men of the vulgar sort—a mob was formed,
 Tumult excited, and in uproar thrown
 The city. They, besetting Jason’s house,
 Sought after Paul and Silas—but in vain.
 Not finding them, they violently seized
 Jason and certain brethren, whom before
 The Rulers of the town they headlong dragged,

(1) It is clear, from the Scriptures, that Christ was to suffer; and some Jews, who could not deny this truth, imagined two Christs, or two Messiahs: the one suffering, the other glorious and triumphant. The second is still expected.

(2) The Greek has it: *a great number of Greeks fearing God*; that is, Proselyte-Gentiles. The Vulgate separates them: the *people fearing God*, are the proselytes; and the Gentiles, those who were still idolaters, and were converted by St. Paul.

Exclaiming: "They who have this uproar caused,
 Are strangers from afar, whom Jason lodged:
 And they are rebels to the laws of Cæsar,
 Saying their King is Jesus." By these means
 The populace and Rulers were inflamed.
 But satisfaction Jason having given, (1)
 He, with the rest, was suffered to depart.

Meanwhile, beneath the cover of the night,
 Paul, aided by the brethren, bent his way,
 With Silas, for Berea. Where, as wont,
 They entered in the synagogue. The Jews
 Were more considerable here than those
 Of Thessalonica. With eagerness
 They heard the gospel; poring, daily, o'er
 The Scriptures, searching if in them was found
 The novel doctrine by the Apostles taught. (2)

(1) It was to the Magistrates, and not the Jews, or populace, to whom Jason gave satisfaction. Probably, he satisfied them by reasoning with them; and, perhaps, by assuring them that Paul and Silas would incontinently depart from Thessalonica. Other views are taken by some commentators: these seem the most probable and natural.

(2) A Jew, to whom the truth of the Christian religion is proposed, has a right to search the Scriptures, to discover whether the texts alleged are really in them, and whether they contain the meaning which is given to them. In this position stood the Jews of Berea. But it does not follow, as Protestants contend, (who too often abuse this example,) that Jews, converted to the faith, have the right to discuss each article of the creed, and form, from the Scriptures, their own particular explanation of each. It is easy to perceive the difference. The Jew, before his conversion, seeks the true religion, and has a right to investigate whether that proposed possesses the characteristics of truth. After his conver-

But when at Thessalonica 'twas noised
 That the Bereans had received the word,
 The Jews—their recent fury rankling yet
 In their mad bosoms—to Berea came,
 Kindling the passions of the multitude
 Against the Apostles. Paul the city left,—
 The brethren thus advising,—for the coast.
 Silas and Timothy (the latter since
 Had joined them) at Berea still remained.
 To Athens Paul now shaped his arduous way,
 With his companions. These, with a command
 To Timothy and Silas in all speed
 To join him in that city, he sent back.

Magnificent Paul stood amid the pride
 Of Athens, breathing the fresh atmosphere
 Of taste and beauty, which serenely spread
 Around her monuments—her Parthenon,
 Her proud Acropolis, her Hill of Mars, (1)

sion, he has found and embraced it; nothing more remains but to believe what it teaches, and practise what it prescribes. Otherwise he would contradict himself; because, after having judged it to be true, he would still doubt whether it might not be false.

Nevertheless, we are permitted to search the Scriptures for the proofs of the dogmas of the Church; in order to find the grounds on which they rest, to penetrate into their signification, to explain them to the people, and to combat with those who attack them. It is the *abuse*, therefore, and not the *use* of the sacred Scriptures, that the Church condemns: while all her children are exhorted to read with humility, and meditate with faith, the life of their divine Redeemer—his heavenly doctrine, and perfect moral.

(1) The Areopagus; one of the quarters of the city. The Senate there sat; in consequence of which it assumed the name.

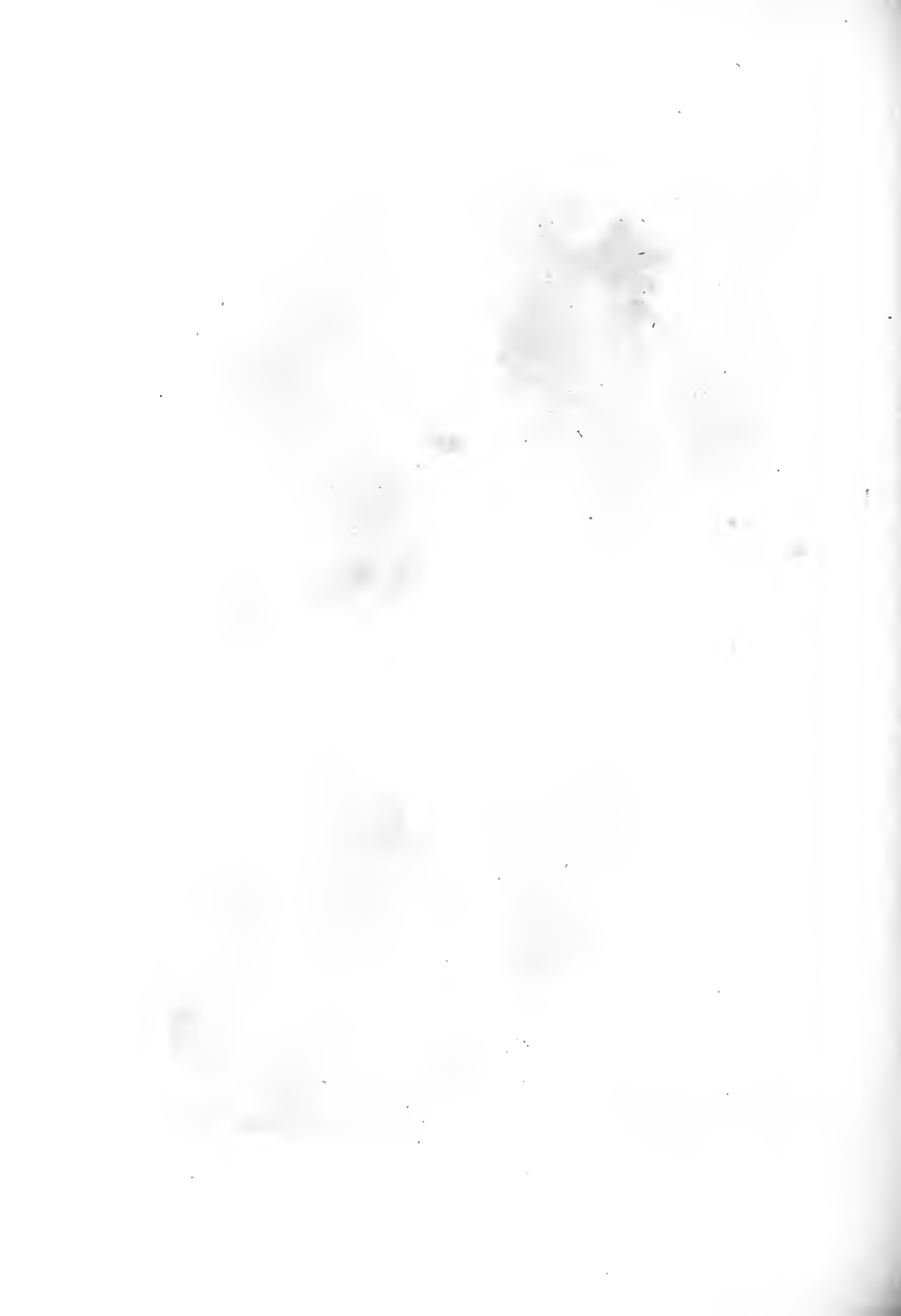
Her columned temples, elegantly grand,
 Her speaking statues, and her sculptured halls.
 The Herald of the name of Christ appears
 Upon that theatre which once was trod
 By Socrates, by Plato "the Divine,"
 And by the Attic sages of past times ;
 And still with wise, and learned, and bright names
 And eloquent, adorned. How mused he there,
 Surrounded by the memories of the dead
 And glories of the living, while, unknown,
 Waiting for Silas and for Timothy !
 The scene presented to his view—of Gods,
 Fashioned with beauteous forms, and polished grace,
 Claiming the worship of the wise and low,
 Idolatrous—how grieved he to behold !
 Athens so spiritual, and yet, alas !
 So superstitious !—How he burned to raise
 Her proud aspiring mind to the high God. (1)

First, he disputed in the Synagogue
 With Jew and Proselyte, and every day
 With those who heard him in the market-place.
 Among this number were philosophers,
 Epicurèans and stern Stoics, who,
 Listening, said : " What doth this talker mean ?" (2)

(1) *Athènes*, writes a celebrated French commentator, *étoit la ville du monde la plus spirituelle ; elle étoit, en même temps, la plus idolâtre.*

(2) The original Greek means, *sower of words*—*ῥητορολογος*. They were, indeed, themselves vain *talkers*. Such philosophers are the most useless of men. If the whole race were extinguished, society would suffer less than by the loss of a good laborer





And others: "He appears to announce new Gods;"
 Because he spake of JESUS, from the tomb
 Arisen, triumphant, never more to die.
 And curious to hear him fully tell,
 Before the assembled wisdom of the land,
 Of his strange doctrines, they conducted him
 Before the Areopagus, and said: (1)
 "May we inquire—for much we wish to know—
 What this new doctrine is thou speakest of?
 We heard thee utter things, which to our ears
 Seem marvellous: we ask thee to explain."

All Athens—citizens and strangers, too—
 Were in commotion; all were occupied
 With these absorbing questions: naught was heard
 In conversation, in the market-place,
 At home, abroad, and every where—but this.

(1) This is the first of the three grand theatres upon which God wished St. Paul to declare his name: the Areopagus of Athens, the great council of Jews at Jerusalem, and the tribunal of Cæsar at Rome. Thus had he to combat all that wit the most refined, passions the most furious, and power the most arbitrary, could array against him. He did every thing in Him who strengthened him. (Phil. iv. 13.)

It is not decided whether St. Paul was conducted before the tribunal itself, or merely to that quarter of the city called the Areopagus, which was the principal *rendezvous* of the Athenians, and where all might have an opportunity of hearing him explain the doctrines of which he was the bearer and defender. The natural character of the Athenians is here graphically developed; that of inquiry, or rather, curiosity to hear any thing intellectual or elevating: a character which grew out of the schools of philosophy for which they were distinguished, and which communicated itself to the populace. I am inclined to follow the general opinion, that Paul pleaded before the tribunal itself.

The Senators of Athens took their seats—
 Grave, philosophic, venerable men—
 Within the Areopagus. Then Paul—
 Ambassador from Heaven—appeared sublime,
 Standing with inspiration on his brow,
 While thousands hung promiscuously around,
 With breathless, fixed attention,—and thus spake :

“Ye men of Athens! in all things, I see,
 Too much to superstition ye are given;
 For, passing through your beauteous capital,
 Contemplating the statues of your Gods,
 An altar—wrought most gracefully indeed—
 But bearing, sculptured in proud characters,
 This strange inscription : ‘TO THE UNKNOWN GOD,’ (1)
 Met my astonished gaze. What ye adore,
 But know not, that I come to announce to you.
 I come to preach that God, by whose vast power
 The universe was formed—the Lord of all—
 Of these bright heavens, and of this varied earth.
 He dwelleth not in temples reared by men ; (2)

(1) St. Jerome says that this altar was dedicated to *the unknown Gods*, (*Diis incognitis*.) It is true, there was such an altar at Athens; but the manner in which St. Paul speaks, leaves no room to doubt that there was one to *the unknown God*. Lucian, or whoever is the author of *Philopatriis*, speaks as having seen it. Who this Deity was, in the idea of the Athenians, to whom they had erected this altar, there can be nothing but conjecture. Taking the inscription literally, we will find that the application of it to the true God could not be more just. The name of God belongs to Him alone: and of all those deities to whom Athens gave the title of God, He was the only one “Unknown.”

(2) God dwells, in a special manner, in the temples consecrated

Nor standeth He in need of honors paid
 By human-kind—for it is He who gives
 Life, respiration, being, and all things:
 Who, from one man, hath peopled all the earth
 With reasonable creatures, the fixed times,
 And habitations, limiting below,
 That they may seek for Him, and, as it were,
 Feel after Him,—though far away from us (1)
 He be not;—for in Him we live and move,
 And have our being: as Aratus sings—
 One of your poets: *We his offspring are.* (2)
 We being, then, the offspring of that God,
 Must not imagine the Divinity
 Like to your statues, graven in silver, gold,
 Or stone, by the devices and the art of men. (3)
 That God, who, during many ages past

to Him, but He *is not shut up* in them. This is the meaning of St. Paul. He speaks for the instruction of the pagans, who imagined no other presence of their Gods than that by which they were circumscribed by the particular place which they occupied.

(1) Although God is invisible, we may know Him by reflection and by reasoning, which is, as it were, the *feeling about* of the soul: just as a blind man, by feeling, may find any article of furniture in his room.

(2) Aratus was a Greek poet and astronomer. His poem on the *phenomena* is extant, and was translated into Latin verse by Cicero.

Offspring of God; that is, His work. For the human body and soul were not produced out of the substance of the Deity.

(3) The workman is always more excellent than his work. Wherefore, if man, considering his soul, which is his more noble part, cannot be represented in figures of marble or metal, how much less can God, the Creator of souls, and the purest of Spirits! This is the reasoning of St. Paul.

Of ignorance, seemed at human crime to wink,
 Declareth that the time is come at length,
 When penance, in all places, must be done :
 Because His wisdom hath marked out a day,
 Wherein to judge, in equity, the world,
 Through Him appointed, giving faith to all,
 By raising Him victorious from the dead."

Thus far attentively the Athenians heard :
 But when the resurrection of the dead
 Paul—with his startling eloquence—proclaimed,
 The chain of hushed attention, suddenly,
 Was burst asunder : some the awful truth
 Indignant mocked ; while others, half-convinced,
 Promised to hear him, at some future time,
 Again upon this matter. So, no more
 Paul added—but the august assembly left. (1)

Yet were there of the number who believed,
 And trampling pagan wisdom, followed Paul.
 First among these—a light to endless times—
 Shines out the name of Dionysius,

Nevertheless, we may represent God under the different figures in which the Scriptures tell us he appeared to men. But these figures do not resemble Him, as the pagans believed their statues resembled the Gods.

Catholics have never, for a moment, believed that the Holy Ghost resembles a dove.

(1) Some interpreters are of opinion that Paul was denounced, like Socrates, in a formal manner. But this is not probable : otherwise such a denunciation would have been terminated by a sentence either of absolution or condemnation.

The Senator—the Areopagite : (1)
 And next of Damaris, a Grecian maid ;
 And others with them, whom we may not name.

The gospel-seed at Athens now was sown, (2)
 And the first fruits thereof the Apostle reaped.
 This was the appointed time to scatter forth,
 Throughout another region, that same seed,
 Where in luxurious harvests it will spread.
 Paul bade farewell to Athens, and arrived
 At Corinth. There he met a certain Jew
 Whose name was Aquila, in Pontus born,
 Who, with his wife Priscilla, had, of late,
 Returned from Italy, having fled from Rome,
 By a decree of Claudius expelled, (3)

(1) It is now agreed that St. Dionysius, Bishop and Apostle of Persia, is different from the Areopagite. All that we know of the latter is that he was the first Bishop of Athens, and that he suffered martyrdom—some say under Hadrian, and others, more probably, under Domitian.

Who the Grecian woman, Damaris, was, history does not inform us: whether a maiden, or the wife of Dionysius, as some have surmised, I know not upon what authority, remains as unknown as are the names and persons of the converts mentioned so briefly by St. Luke in these words: *and others with them*. And these were all whom the inspired eloquence of Paul convinced! only one among the members of the tribunal, (which, *en passant*, I may add, in confirmation of its being styled above in the verse, the *Hill of Mars*, is called by Ovid, the *Martis forensæ tribunal*;) one female, and a few other listeners among the crowd that flocked to hear him, and many for the second time. How many have perished for not profiting by the *first* such opportunity of knowing the truth!

(2) Chap. xviii.

(3) Suetonius states, that the Jews were banished from Rome

With all his brother-Jews: to these Paul came,
And lodged with them beneath their roof, and wrought
At making tents—this was the trade of both. (1)

Meanwhile, on every Sabbath he discoursed,
As usual, in the synagogue; the name
Of the Lord Jesus blending with his speech:
And reasoned also with the Jews and Greeks.
And when from Macedonia were come
Silas and Timothy, with earnest force

on account of the troubles they there excited, *impulsore Chresto*, at the instigation of *Chrest*. In this he betrays a two-fold ignorance: one of the name of Christ, whom he called *Chrest*; the other of the period of his death, which occurred many years previous to the troubles of which he makes him the instigator. We find here, however, the true cause of their banishment, viz.: the insurrection of the Jews against those of their nation who had embraced Christianity. Claudius, without examining who were culpable or not, expelled them all. This banishment did not continue long. When St. Paul went to Rome for the first time, he found Jews residing there; and we learn from his epistle to the Romans, which was written before the journey, that Aquila and his wife had gone back to Rome, as he sends his salutations to them in that city.

(1) He had learned this trade, following the usage of the Pharisees, who were obliged, by their regulations, to have a trade; in this respect they were praiseworthy, whether the object was to gain a livelihood, or to prevent idleness.

Paul labored, says St. Chrysostom, *and preached; let us blush, who neither preach nor labor*. He worked, that he might not be an expense to the faithful, although he had a right to be supported by them. There are some who are nourished, and grow fat on the property of the Church, says Father De Ligny, and who do nothing. What a contrast! St. Paul has, indeed, had noble imitators of his disinterestedness, in all ages and places.

And vehemence divine, Paul preached abroad,
 Showing the Jews that JESUS is the CHRIST.
 But, as they contradicted and blasphemed,
 Shaking his garments with indignant zeal, (1)
 "Your blood be on your guilty heads," he cried, (2)
 "For of it I am clean and innocent:
 Henceforth unto the Gentiles I will go."

And yet a hope—for hope had not expired
 Within his bosom, for his own dear race—
 Kept him, though parting with them, not far off.
 But, still, he went; and with a man whose name
 Was Titus Justus—one who worshipped God—
 Made his abode, hard by the synagogue.
 There, midst the obstinacy of the Jews,
 Some signal triumphs to the Christian cause
 Consoled his spirit, and his labor crowned.
 Crispus, the Ruler of the synagogue
 And all his house embraced the faith of Christ.

(1) A sign of detestation and imprecation, of which we find many instances in holy writ. Its signification is expressed by these words of Nehemias: *I shook my lap and said, So may God shake every man that shall not accomplish his word, out of his house, and out of his labors; thus may he be shaken out and become empty. And all the multitude said, Amen.* (2 Esdras, v. 13.)

(2) That is to say, let your loss be imputed to yourselves. St. Paul is innocent of it, because he did all that he could to save them. If he had not, he would have been culpable, and God would have required their *blood* of him. This is the expression of Ezekiel, used by St. Paul in this place, as also in the twentieth chapter. Ministers of religion! beware lest you may be called upon at the last day, to answer for the loss, by your neglect, of those under your care.

Of the Corinthians many in the Lord
 Believed, and were baptized. By his own hands,
 Crispus, and Gaius, and the family
 Of Stephanas—none other: but the rest,
 By his associates in the ministry. (1)

Much hardship, Paul, much suffering endured,
 At Corinth,—the details are veiled from sight:
 And yet not wholly; for his sacred pen
 Hath traced the picture of his ceaseless fear,
 And pain, and trembling, and infirmity. (2)
 But heaven sustained him; and still more to cheer
 His anxious heart, the Lord appeared at night,
 In a resplendent vision, and thus spake:
 "Fear not; speak on, and do not hold thy peace,
 For I am with thee; and no man shall dare
 To hurt thee in this city: for I have
 Much people here who know and fear my name."
 Encouraged thus, at Corinth he remained
 For no short time, teaching the word of God. (3)

The promise made by Heaven was now fulfilled:
 The Jews conspired, but could not do him harm.
 'Tis true, they seized upon him, and by force
 Dragged him, tumultuous, to the judgment-seat

(1) *I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; and . . . also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other; for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach.* (1 Cor. i. 14, 16, 17.)

(2) *And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.* (1 Cor. ix. 3.)

(3) He continued there eighteen months.

Of Gallio, the Proconsul, charged with crime : (1)
 "This man," they clamored, "would persuade the
 world

To give God worship which the law forbids."
 Paul was beginning to respond, when thus
 Gallio addressed them : "Were it of some guilt,
 Some heinous deed, O Jews, he stood accused,
 With reason should I hear you patiently ;
 But if the questions be of words, and names, (2)
 And things relating to your law, 'tis yours
 To look into them ; they come not within
 The scope of my tribunal : of such things
 I will not judge." And with this reprimand,
 He drove them, murmuring, from the judgment-seat.

Thwarted in this conspiracy, they let fall
 The weight of their revenge upon the head
 Of Sosthenes, chief of the synagogue. (3)

(1) Titus Annæus Gallio, brother of Seneca the philosopher, took his name from a certain Gallio by whom he had been adopted. The influence of his brother obtained for him the proconsulate of Achaia. He was afterwards disgraced, and died by his own hands.

(2) What he meant by *words* and *names*, we know not—perhaps he himself knew as little. He, perhaps, might have understood that the question was, whether the *names* of Messiah and Christ were applicable to Jesus—a pagan might well style this a question of *names*.

(3) The ordinary Greek copies say that it was the *Greeks* that beat Sosthenes ; but this is not conformable to the Vulgate, or the more ancient Greek MSS. It is much more probable that Sosthenes was beaten on account of his adhering to Paul, by the Jews themselves. This is the opinion of the Church. See the *Roman Martyrology*, 23th November.

Before the judgment-seat of Gallio
 They rushed on him and violently beat,
 While the Proconsul heedlessly looked on. (1)

Yet many days at Corinth Paul delayed,
 When, of the brethren taking his farewell,
 For Syria he embarked,—his head being shorn
 In Cenchra, (for he there had made a vow,)— (2)
 By Aquila attended on his way,
 And by Priscilla ; whom, when they arrived
 At Ephesus, he left there ; and forthwith
 Entering himself into the synagogue,
 He reasoned with the people who desired

Crispus is likewise called the Ruler of the synagogue ; whence it follows that there were more than one, or that at Corinth there were several synagogues.

(1) Gallio has been praised for his mildness, because he would not listen to the accusers of St. Paul ; for his reserve, because he refused to judge in matters of religion ; and for his prudence, because he would not meddle with an affair which he knew nothing about. But his indifference at the sight of the ill-treatment of Sosthenes, discovers the true motive of his conduct, viz. : a sovereign contempt for the Jews and every thing that concerned them.

(2) From the wording of the text, it would seem doubtful whether it was Paul or Aquila who made the vow. All interpreters agree that it was the Apostle. This was the vow of the Nazarenes. It consisted in letting the hair grow, and abstaining from wine and intoxicating drinks, during the time that the vow obligated. If, before the term had expired, any legal impurity was contracted, the time preceding that was not counted. It was necessary to shave the head anew, and begin again. The sacrifices enjoined are mentioned in *Numbers* vi. It was by condescension that St. Paul practised this Jewish devotion, to which no one was obliged. It was at Cenchra, the eastern port of Corinth, that he made the vow, before his embarkation.

That for a longer time he would remain.
 To their request he yielded not assent,
 But bidding them adieu, "If God so will,
 To Ephesus I will return," he said.
 Landing at Cesarca, he went up,
 Rejoicing, to Jerusalem, to see
 And to salute that venerable Church.
 To Antioch he then proceeded, whence,
 After a short sojourn, he onward moved,
 And traversed Phrygia and Galatia,
 Strengthening the scattered brethren in their faith. (1)

There happened, at this juncture, to arrive
 At Ephesus, a Jew, Apollo named,—
 Alexandria was his place of birth,—
 For eloquence renowned, and deeply versed (2)
 And mighty in the Scriptures: he had been
 Instructed in the way of God; his words
 Sparkled with zeal; and earnestly he taught
 The truths that are of Jesus, though, meanwhile,
 He knew no baptism, saving that of John. (3)

(1) Pastoral visits; a necessary means to correct evil and preserve good. Strictly should they be attended to by the Prelates, who have charge of the Pastors as well as the flocks, and by the Pastors, who are to give an account to their Prelates. Let them study the indefatigable zeal and never-shrinking perseverance of St. Paul and the other Apostles.

(2) *Mighty*—that is to say, not only skilled in the knowledge of the Scriptures, but knowing how to employ them with power and success. Happy they, in these times of incredulity, who possess this double qualification!

(3) Others were in the same error, or rather the same ignorance. Whether these had received the baptism of John in Judea,

With boldness in the synagogue he spake ;
 And when Priscilla heard, and Aquila,
 They took him to their home, where they explained
 More diligently all the way of God. (1)
 Into Achaia he departed then,
 With kindly letters to the brethren there
 From those by whom instructed in the faith.
 In him a powerful support they found ;
 An advocate triumphant of the truth ;
 For from the Scriptures he convinced the Jews,
 In open day, that Jesus is the CHRIST.

What Paul conditionally promised, that (2)

or whether his disciples had conferred baptism at Ephesus, we do not know—nor is the question of much importance.

(1) Apollo, so versed in the Scriptures, learns a capital truth from two laics, both artisans, and one a woman. They, simple and ignorant people, had been instructed by St. Paul. Study, without the teaching of the Pastors, is not sufficient for the learned : the teaching of the Pastors, without learning, suffices for the simple. Thus the latter are led, without effort, to the knowledge of all truths ; and the former are protected against the inflation of science, and the errors of the human mind. Admirable medium ! proper and necessary for all men.

Still the science of Apollo was not useless to him. After being fully instructed, it made him a Doctor of the Church—what Priscilla and Aquila never could become.

The reader may now understand the words of St. Paul : (1 Cor. iii. 6 :) *I have planted, Apollo hath watered.* So great was the fruit produced at Corinth by the labors of Apollo, that the faithful equalled him, in their conversations, to Paul and Peter : *Each one of you sayeth, I indeed am of Paul ; but I of Apollo ; and I, again, of Cephas.* (1 Cor. i. 12.) St. Paul justly censures these partialities—forgetting in them Jesus Christ, the Master of all, the Pastor of pastors.

(2) Chap. xix.

God now decreed should come to pass. While yet
 Apollo was at Corinth, going through
 The upper provinces of Asia, (1)
 To Ephesus Paul shaped his course again.
 There some disciples still he found, to whom
 This question he addressed: "Have ye received,
 Since ye embraced the faith, the Holy Ghost?"
 "Whether there be a Holy Ghost," they said,
 "We have not even heard."—To whom again:
 "With what baptism, then, have ye been bapti-
 zed?" (2)
 "With John's."—Then Paul: "The people John
 baptized
 With the baptism of penance, that they should

(1) These were Galatia and Phrygia, of which mention is made above. They are situated to the north of Ephesus, which was, as it were, the metropolis of Asia Minor. On account of their situation, they are here styled the upper "coasts," or provinces.

(2) Does not this question clearly signify that they could not have received the true baptism—*Christian baptism*? Paul conferred it afterwards, *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*; wherefore, in the baptism which was given in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the Holy Ghost, and consequently the three divine persons, were expressly named. Protestants have pretended that the baptism of John had the same virtue as that of Christ, and was administered in the same manner. If this had been the case, Apollo, who *knew no baptism but John's*, would not have required fuller instruction; and these Ephesians could not have replied, that they had never heard of the Holy Ghost. This error has given rise to the following canon of the Council of Trent: *If any one should say that the baptism of John possessed the same virtue as the baptism of Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (Sess. 7.)

The words of St. Paul teach us that John exacted of all whom he baptized, an explicit faith in the Messiah, then on earth, *who*

Believe in Him, who after was to come—
 And that was JESUS." Having heard these things,
 With water, in the name of JESUS CHRIST,
 They were regenerated; and when Paul
 Imposed his hands, the Holy Ghost came down,
 And divers tongues they spake, and prophesied;
 These favored brethren were, in number, twelve.
 Then to the synagogue repairing, Paul
 Spake fearlessly; for three successive months
 Disputing with the Jews, exhorting all
 In what concerned God's kingdom. Well disposed—
 Unlike their nation spread through other parts—
 Most heard, complacently, the word of truth.
 Yet some were hardened and incredulous,
 Who publicly denied the way of God:
 From these Paul separated, and withdrew (1)
 His followers; and daily in the school
 Disputed, of a man Tyrannus named.
 His conferences there two years were held,
 Frequented by the Gentiles and the Jews,
 Through whom all Asia heard the word of God.
 Meanwhile God wrought unprecedented signs

was to impart the remission of sins, for which his own baptism
 was but a remote disposition. *Behold the Lamb of God, &c.*

(1) Paul did not fly from them; but deemed it prudent to put
 an end to a disputation which caused the incredulous to hear new
 blasphemies, and the neophytes to be exposed to temptation. The
 naturally ardent and fearless character of St. Paul was governed
 by the influences of divine grace. Controversies before mixed
 audiences, may sometimes be unavoidable: then must they be
 sustained. But often do those which are brought about by too
 much ardor of temperament, produce the effects which St. Paul
 carefully studied to prevent.

And signal wonders by the hand of Paul ;
 So that the aprons on his person worn,
 And handkerchiefs, when to the sick applied,
 Healed their diseases ; and the spirits dark
 Were, by their virtue, driven from the possessed. (1)

This power some exorcists of the Jews (2)
 Essayed to imitate ; they went about
 Invoking over those who were possessed,
 The name of Jesus,—speaking to the spirits :
 “ In virtue of the power of Jesus, whom
 Paul preacheth, I conjure you.” Among those
 Who practised this, were Sceva’s seven sons,— (3)
 A Jew and Chief of Priests. To them replied
 The evil spirit : “ Jesus well I know,
 And PAUL I know,—but tell me, who are ye ?”
 At that same instant, the unhappy man
 O’er whom the wicked spirit mastery held,
 Leaped on them furiously, and forced them both,
 Naked and wounded, from the house to flee. (4)

(1) The efficacy of these *relics* was certainly wonderful. They wrought miracles. Would certain declaimers against the use of relics now in the Catholic Church, have believed if they had seen them? What will Protestantism answer to this? The *Sudaria* may be translated—handkerchiefs; but literally, linen used for wiping off the perspiration. *Semicinctia* were aprons; which probably St. Paul used when at work.

(2) The Jews had exorcists who used, with success, certain formularies of conjuration, taught by Solomon.

(3) Sceva perhaps was the chief of the twenty-four sacerdotal families—or, it might be, at the head of the sacerdotal order established at Ephesus.

(4) When John said to Jesus, “ We have seen a man who is

When to the Jews and Gentiles this was known
 At Ephesus, with terror all were seized,
 And the Lord Jesus' name was magnified.
 Many believed, and to the Apostle came,
 Confessing and declaring all their deeds ; (1)
 Others who to the magic art were given— (2)
 That dark and curious science—brought their
 books,

not one of ours, expelling devils in thy name, and we have prevented him." Jesus replied, "*Hinder him not.*" (Mark ix. 37. 38.) To answer thus was to approve of what that man was doing ; and we cannot doubt that he did disapprove of these, since he suffered them to be so ill-treated by the devil,—and still the action was exactly the same. But circumstances may have made that which was serviceable to the faith on one side, prejudicial on the other. Different intentions could produce, in the same action, essential differences. The man whom Jesus would not hinder, on account of the principle of faith that was in him, had in view the relief of those whom he exorcised. The sons of Seeva probably regarded the invocation of the name of Jesus as a secret charm ; and had in view nothing but the glory of succeeding in his exorcisms, and, perhaps, the profit he might receive. In this case, he deserved to be treated as he was.

(1) The Greek and Latin word signifies properly that they *announced* their deeds ; that is, that they made a public confession. This they did from fervor and humiliation ; for public confession was never of precept. The Council of Trent does not refer to this example as a proof of sacramental confession.

(2) *Magic*—called by the ancients the *curious science*, on account of the inclination of men to give to their crimes names which palliate the heinousness of them. Thus, at the present day, speak of a man buried in debauch, and he is called *dissolute*. Of all the arts, that of magic was the most abominable. The books treating of this science were publicly consumed : and what a blessing to our age would it be, if all the miserable, loose, and infidel "cheap literature" which spreads over the land, was consigned to the flames !

And publicly consigned them to the flames. (1)
Widely and mightily thus the word of God
Diffused itself, and grew, and was confirmed.

These triumphs won, Paul, by the Spirit led,
Resolved through Macedonia to pass,
And through Achaia, to Jerusalem.
“Where when again I find myself,” he mused,
“The world’s proud mistress I must visit—*ROME*.”
Deputing into Macedonia
Two of his ministering brethren, Timothy,
And one Erastus named—in Asia
For some time longer he himself remained.

No small disturbance, at this juncture, rose
About the way of God: a silversmith,
By name Demetrius, who with cunning art,
Small silver temples of Diana made,
And thereby brought great profit to his craft, (2)
Assembling all the workmen of his trade,
Harangued them thus: “My fellow-craftsmen, hear;
Our gain, ye know, dependeth on our trade;
Yet have ye seen, and every day ye learn,
That this man Paul, by his persuasion, hath
At Ephesus, and through all Asia, drawn

(1) Their price was estimated at forty thousand pieces of silver.

(2) It appears that these representations were in relief. If, as some imagine, they had been plates, or medals, how could so many workmen have been engaged in a business which required so little work?

Great multitudes from the immortal Gods,
Asserting that the works of our own hands
Are not divinities. But what is worse,
Not only on our craft the loss will fall,
But that majestic pile, that temple proud, (1)
Reared to the great Diana, will be spurned;
The majesty and glory of her name,
Whom Asia worshippeth and all the world,
Shall be obscured, and finally decay."

These words inflamed their anger, and they cried,
"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"
Throughout the city vast confusion spread:
Crowds to the theatre impetuous rushed, (2)
Dragging with them Paul's two associates,
Caius and Aristarchus—Macedonians.

To rescue them, and calm this raging storm,
Before the people Paul would have appeared,
But the disciples checked him; and his friends—
Some of the ruling men of Asia—
Conjured him not within the theatre
His person venture, and expose his life.

(1) Every reader knows that the temple of Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was 425 feet in length, 220 in breadth, and supported by 127 columns, each 60 feet high. Pliny adds, that the mere mention of the beauties it contained, would fill several volumes. It was pillaged and burned by the Greeks, under Gallienus.

(2) The place where the theatre was situated, and where public exhibitions were given. In this place, also, the people held their meetings.

Great was the uproar : loud discordant cries
 On every side arose—some one thing shouted,
 And some another ;—wild confusion reigned
 Amid the noisy multitude, of whom
 The greater part knew not why they had thronged.

The Jews, alarmed, lest on their heads should break
 The fury of this tempest, from the crowd
 Drew one of theirs, and forward thrust him :
 This man, named Alexander, with his hand
 Beckoned for silence, that he might be heard ; (1)
 But knowing him to be a Jew, the crowds
 Blended their voices in one thundering shout—
 “Great is Diana of the Ephesians !”
 Peal upon peal this acclamation rang,
 Fearful and hoarse, for two incessant hours.
 The temples, theatre, and public streets,
 Columns and statues shook amid the roar :
 “Great is Diana of the Ephesians !”

The elements of tumult lashed to rage,
 What power can appease ? Had but one voice
 Shrieked out, “*Exterminate our enemies !*”
 Blood would have flowed in torrents—carnage dire
 And desolation o’er the city stalked.

But now, to calm and lay the threatening storm,

(1) His design was, no doubt, to caution them not to confound the cause of the Jews with that of Paul and the Christians. All were, however, equally the declared enemies of Diana, and all the pagan divinities

Was the stern study of the Magistrates :
 At length they checked its fury and appeased.
 The multitudes to silence were restored,
 When, standing in their midst, the town-clerk
 spake :

“Ephesian citizens ! what man is there
 Who doth not know that our proud Ephesus
 Worships, with special pomp, and honor due,
 The great Diana, offspring of high Jove !
 This is notorious—this no one can doubt :
 Then why this dread commotion ? Let it cease :
 Be quiet—act not rashly—for these men (1)
 Whom ye have riotously hither dragged,
 Neither of sacrilege, nor blasphemy
 Against your goddess, can be guilty proved.
 But if Demetrius and his tradesmen have
 An accusation against any one,
 By the Proconsuls let the case be heard :
 The courts are open—they can plead it *there*.
 If any other question should require
 Investigation, let appeal be made
 To a legitimate assembly ; for
 The vast, tumultuous gathering here to-day,

(1) St. Chrysostom remarks, that in order to calm the people, he had recourse to an officious lie. It is probable, however, that St. Paul and his companions contented themselves with saying that the *gods made by human hands are not true gods*. But it is not probable that they inveighed particularly against Diana. Wisdom directs that the truth should be proposed in a manner that may not be revolting to prejudiced minds ; and the discourse of St. Paul before the Areopagus shows very clearly that he did not disregard these necessary precautions.

Looks like sedition, as we can allege
Naught—if required—to vindicate this mob.”

This speech, with flattery, caution, menace fraught,
Achieved the wished-for end—the tumult died,
And peacefully the multitude dispersed.

But yet in safety Paul could now remain (1)
At Ephesus no longer: other parts
Were still to be enlightened. When to peace
The city was restored, together came
All the disciples; whom with earnest zeal
Having exhorted—by the Holy Ghost
Guided—to Ephesus he bade farewell,
And shaped for Macedonia his course.
Throughout that country journeying, he addressed
The faithful as he passed; till into Greece
He penetrated: there three months he spent, (2)
And would have sailed for Syria; but the Jews
Laid wait for him; wherefore he changed his
course,
Resolved through Macedonia to return.
Thither, as his companions, went the son
Of Pyrrhus of Berea; Sopater,
Secundus, Aristarchus, Timothy,
Gaius of Derbe—Thessalonians;
And Trophimus and Tyehicus of Asia. (3)

(1) Chap. xx.

(2) Into Achaia, which was Greece properly so called; though, in a more extended sense, Macedonia was a part of Greece.

(3) The names of all these companions of St. Paul are in the Roman Martyrology. The city of Arles honors Trophimus as her

These, having gone before, at Troas stayed,
 Awaiting us. The Azymes being past,
 We from Philippi sailed, and in five days
 Joined them at Troas, where seven we abode. (1)

Upon the day that first dawns on the week, (2)
 When, as our wont, together we had met
 To celebrate the breaking of the bread,
 Paul—on the morrow to depart prepared—
 Discoursed before the brethren, and prolonged
 His speech till midnight. Many lamps burned bright
 Throughout the chamber. And a certain youth
 Named Eutyehus, who on the window sat
 During Paul's long discourse, being oppressed

Apostle. Of him Pope Zosimus says, that his preaching was the source from which the streams of faith spread through Gaul. Zosimus regarded Trophimus as the first Apostle of the Gauls. We leave to the learned, however, to decide whether Trophimus of Arles was the disciple of St. Paul, or another Trophimus, sent into Gaul two centuries later.

(1) Here St. Luke resumes the first person, "we:" he, of course, again joined St. Paul. He separated from him when the Apostle started from Philippi into Macedonia. From that time to the present, about five years elapsed. What he did during that interval, we know not. Perhaps he was collecting materials for his Gospel, in regard to which he informs us that he consulted with those *who from the beginning had seen* the things which he was to relate.

Troas is the name of the country of which ancient Troy was the capital. There was another city of this name on the sea-coast, not far from the ruins of Troy.

(2) The first day of the week had already taken the place of the Sabbath, and was the day of the Lord for Christians. But it did not yet bear the name; which, however, it soon acquired, as we find it in the *Apocalypse*, i. 10.

With sleep profound, precipitate fell down
 From the third story to the street below,
 Whence, as if dead, they carried him away.
 But hastening down, Paul laid himself upon him,
 Embraced the body tenderly, and said :
 "Do not be troubled, for his soul is here."

Then going up again, the bread he brake, (1)
 And tasted : until day woke in the heavens,
 He held long converse ; and then bade adieu.
 The youth was living—and all were consoled.

We then, embarking, spread our sails for Assos, (2)
 Where 'twas arranged that we should take in Paul—
 For he by land proposed to travel : thence,
 With him, for Mytelene we our course
 Pursued ; where, setting sail, we came to land
 Upon the following morn, over against
 The port of Scio ; and, next day, arrived
 At Samos,—and ere the succeeding eve
 Sank in the deep, Miletus bade us hail ;—
 For Paul, too long lest he might be detained
 In Asia, had through Ephesus resolved
 To pass, hast'ning, if possible, to spend

(1) After the fraction of the Eucharistic bread, St. Paul took some nourishment, following the usage of the primitive times, when the faithful, after having received communion, together took a repast which was styled *Agape*, a Greek word signifying charity.

(2) Assos, a maritime city of Troas. Mytelene, a considerable town in the isle of Lesbos, whence this island took the name of *Metelina*. Scio and Samos, two islands of the Archipelago.

The Pentecost-day at Jerusalem. (1)
 To Ephesus the Ancients, at his call, (2)
 Came from Miletus ; whom, when gathered round,
 He thus addressed : " You know how, from the day
 When first I entered Asia, I have lived (2)
 Among you all the time ; how I have served
 The Lord with tears and all humility,
 Amid the dangers and conspiracies
 The Jews against me plotted : and ye know
 That nothing profitable have I failed
 Or publicly or privately to preach ;
 Proclaiming and to Gentile and to Jew,
 Penance towards God, and in CHRIST JESUS faith.
 And now behold, being in the SPIRIT bound, (3)

(1) St. Paul went to celebrate the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem : that is, the *Christian* and not the *Jewish* Pentecost. This is the opinion of St. Epiphanius, and other ecclesiastical writers. If it be objected that the Christian Pentecost could be celebrated anywhere, I answer that still it might be celebrated with more devotion on the very cenacle on which the Holy Spirit first descended on the Apostles.

(2) The Bishops and Priests ; for it appears that those of the circumjacent cities were likewise invited. It was not possible for the multitude of faithful to transport themselves from one city to another, nor was their presence necessary. The Apostle labored efficaciously for their sanctification, in laboring for that of their Pastors.

The discourse of St. Paul is a vindication of his conduct at Ephesus. The Saints see so distinctly that all the good that is in them comes from God, that they are not tempted to attribute any part of it to themselves. This was the case with St. Paul in an eminent degree.

(3) Some understand by *bound*, the chains he was to be bound with in Jerusalem, which his anticipated knowledge rendered, as it were, present. Others think that *bound by the Holy Ghost*, sig-

I wend my way back to Jerusalem,
 Where what awaits me I cannot foresee, (1)
 Save that the Holy Ghost, in every town,
 Witnesseth to me, saying: irons and
 Afflictions wait me at Jerusalem.
 But of these tribulations I fear none,
 Nor count my life more precious than myself, (2)
 Provided only that my destined course
 I may consummate, and the ministry
 By the LORD JESUS to my care consigned,
 To preach the Gospel of the grace of God.
 But one sad truth I know—that all of you
 Among whom I have gone, preaching abroad
 God's kingdom, shall behold my face no more.
 Wherefore I take you witnesses, this day,
 That I am innocent of the blood of all;
 For all the way and counsel of the Lord

nifies that he was led to Jerusalem by the Spirit of God, and, in some sense, *forced to go thither* by the Holy Ghost.

He did not know in detail the sufferings that awaited him in Jerusalem; nor was he certain whether or not he should lose his life. In many cities through which he passed, he had met prophets, (for they were numerous among the primitive Christians,) who announced his future tribulations at Jerusalem.

(1) What is this *life* which he distinguishes from *himself*, if not his immortal soul, which, by the loss of temporal life, will enter into the possession of eternal life?

(2) And yet, some years after, writing to the Philippians, he tells them that he hopes to see them soon; and some parts of his Epistles give us to understand, in effect, that he did return to the east. This has caused some interpreters to believe that it was only by conjecture that he said the Philippians would never more *see his face*. But he speaks too affirmatively to admit merely of conjecture. *I know*, he asserts.

Have I unsparingly to you declared.
 Then to yourselves take heed, and to the flock (1)
 Wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops,
 To rule the Church of God, with his own blood
 Which he hath purchased: for full well I know,
 That after my departure ravening wolves (2)
 Into the fold will enter; and, alas!
 Even of your own selves shall men arise,
 Speaking perverse things, leading in their train
 Deluded followers:—ye, therefore, watch—
 Mindful of my example. For three years
 I have not ceased to admonish, day and night,
 Each one among you; whom I now commend (3)
 To God and to his grace; who can build up
 The edifice begun, and give you part
 In his inheritance, with all the saints.
 Of no man gold or silver have I asked,
 Or yet apparel, as full well ye know:
 For all things needful to myself and those

(1) *He who knoweth not how to govern his house*, writes the Apostle to Timothy, (1 Tim. iii.) *how will he rule the Church of God?* and much less, if he cannot govern himself. This advice is general for all times and all Pastors: but here he recommends a redoubled vigilance. He is about predicting persecutions, and seduction from the truth. The Pastors must, likewise, *take heed to themselves*: for Pastors, or Bishops, as they are, what are they but men? and, like other mortals, liable to fall into errors and sin.

(2) “*Ravening wolves*” are declared persecutors, teachers of perverse doctrines, heretics. The Church began with them, and they will finish only with the Church.

(3) In the text it is translated, *and the word of his grace*; that is, the word of the Gospel. Some commentators (whom I follow) render it merely by: *and to his grace*.

Attending me were furnished by these hands.
This you have witnessed : that by laboring
As I have done, ye should support the weak.
And bear the word of Jesus in your minds :
More blessed 'tis to give than to receive." (1)

He ceased ; and kneeling down, with them he
prayed :
Then was there bitter weeping among all ;
And clinging round Paul's neck with warm embrace
They kissed him, with deep sorrow overcome,
To think no more—according to the word
Himself had uttered—they should see his face
And to the ship they followed him with tears.

(1) St. Paul must have learned this maxim from some one of those who heard it drop from the sacred lips of Jesus, because it is not to be found in the Gospels. And yet there is no doubt that it is cited, not in substance, but in the words themselves, as used by the divine Redeemer.

BOOK FOURTH.⁽¹⁾

CONTENTS:

Prophecy of Agabus—St. Paul at Jerusalem—The Jews seize on him—The Tribune Lysias rescues him—His discourse to the Jews—The Tribune condemns him to be scourged—He declares himself a Roman citizen—He is struck by order of the High Priest—He curses him—Retracts—Contentions between the Sadducees and Pharisees—Conspiracy against Paul—He is sent to Cæsarea—His accusation and defence before Felix—He is accused before Festus—His answer—His appeal to Cæsar—Agrippa and Bernice desire to hear him—His discourse, addressed to Agrippa—He embarks, on his way to Rome—Horrible tempest—The vessel lost—He lands at Malta—Cures the sick—Departs—Arrives at Rome—Assembles the chief men among the Jews—Speaks to them, without fruit—Announces the Gospel to all who listen to him.

THEN from their arms tearing ourselves by
force, (2)

We spread our sails, and in a course direct,
Bore down to Coos; (3) thence, the following day,
To Rhodes; and thence to Patara we crossed.
Where, having found a ship about to sail
Into Phœnicia, we forthwith embarked.
Steering in sight of Cyprus, towards the left
We stood away for Syria, till at Tyre—

(1) From the twenty-first to the last chapter, inclusively.

(2) Chap. xxi.

(3) *Coos*—now *Stanchio*—a considerable island of the Archipelago; one of the Cyclades. This was the birth-place of Hippocrates, the prince of physicians; and of Apelles, the greatest painter of antiquity. *Rhodes* is well known. *Patara* is now called *Patera*—a maritime town of ancient Lycia; the birth-place of St. Nicholas.

For there the ship was destined to unlade—
 We made the land ; and during seven days,
 With the disciples tarried in that port.
 Through these, the Holy Spirit cautioned Paul (1)
 That to Jerusalem he should not proceed.

The seven days expired, and then again
 Our journey we continued : on our way
 Without the city, followed crowds of brethren,
 Bringing their wives and children. On the shore
 We kneeled, and fervently together prayed.
 Then having bid another long farewell,
 The ready ship we mounted. They returned,
 Each, sorrowing, to his home. From Tyre we sailed
 To Ptolemais, (2) and there one day abode
 Among the brethren : on the next we came
 To Cæsarea ; with the Evangelist—
 One of the seven—Philip, there we dwelled, (3)
 Whose four young virgin-daughters prophesied. (4)

(1) The Holy Ghost revealed to them the persecutions that there awaited him. They advised him not to expose himself to them : *this* they advised of their own impulse ; not by that of the Holy Ghost, whose will it was that he should encounter them, as we saw above.

(2) Since called *St. Jean d'Acre*—a city famed in the history of the Crusades, for the many sieges it sustained.

(3) One of the seven Deacons mentioned in chapters vi. and viii.

(4) This was the accomplishment of the prediction of Joel ; *Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy*. They were virgins, and therefore better fitted to receive the celestial illuminations. The Church honors them as Saints. St. Jerome, writing against Jovinian, remarks, that the profession of virginity commenced with the beginning of Christianity

While tarrying in that city for some days,
 A certain Prophet from Judea came,
 Whose name was Agabus: he, seeing Paul, (1)
 His girdle took; wherewith his hands and feet
 Binding, he spake: "Thus saith the Holy Ghost:
 Thus shall the Jews bind, in Jerusalem,
 The man whose girdle this is; and into
 The Gentiles' hands shall they deliver him."

Hearing these words, we earnestly conjured—
 We and the people of the city—Paul,
 Not to return back to Jerusalem.
 "Why do ye mourn and weep?" he thus replied, (2)
 "My heart with grief affecting? For myself,
 I am prepared, not only to be bound,
 But likewise in Jerusalem to die,

(1) The same who, as we have seen, foretold the famine which was to take place under the Emperor Claudius. It was not unusual for prophets to join to certain words external actions, which rendered their predictions more sensible. These actions were as much inspired as their words, as we learn from the examples of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c.

(2) St. Paul had consented to leave Damascus at the solicitation of his brethren: he yielded to the advice of his friends, by not risking his life in the theatre at Ephesus. Now, neither prayers nor tears can prevent him from facing the fury of the Jews. God wished him, on the two former occasions, not to encounter danger; and now he wills that he should. The different wills of Providence, which were known to him, were the causes of his different conduct. This is the remark of St. Chrysostom.

He cared not for the persecutions he was to encounter, but was overcome by grief at witnessing the tears of his brethren. If it is beautiful to possess such sensibility how glorious is it to conquer it!

If need be, for the name of JESUS CHRIST."
 Unable to dissuade him by our tears,
 We ceased, and said, "The will of God be done.
 After those days, we being now prepared,
 Up to Jerusalem, at length, set out
 From Cæsarea, followed by some few
 Of the Disciples. Among whom was he
 Whose name was Mnason,—venerable man—
 And old disciple, Cyprian by birth.
 With whom it was determined we should lodge.

Safely we reached the fatal capital—
 Once holy, now profane—Jerusalem!
 When rose the morrow's sun, Paul went to James, (1)
 By us attended—and the Ancients there (2)
 Were all assembled. He saluted these;
 And, in detail, narrated what the Lord
 Among the Gentiles, by his ministry,
 Had marvellously wrought. Which having heard,
 They praised God's name; yet, fearing lest the spread
 Of certain rumors,—groundless, it is true,
 But yet believed,—the Gospel might retard,
 They added these remarks: "Thou seest, brother,

(1) James the *minor*, called the brother of the Lord. All the other Apostles were dispersed. He was the only one who did not quit Jerusalem, of which he was the established Bishop. Thus the first Bishop was the first to observe the law of *residence*. St. Paul paid due homage to his sanctity and dignity. About four years later, St. James was put to death by the Jews. After this crime, Jerusalem had no more Apostles.

(2) The Clergy of Jerusalem. The Greek word signifies both *Ancient* and *Priests*, as has been before observed.

How many thousand Hebrews have believed, (1)
 And yet they all are zealots for the law.
 Now, they have heard of thee, that thou dost teach
 Those Jews among the Gentiles, to depart
 From Moses; that they should not circumcise
 Their children, nor the ancient rites observe.
 What, therefore, must be done? The multitude
 Must needs together come; for they will hear
 That thou hast come among us: therefore do
 As we now counsel. There are here four men, (2)
 By vow devoted; take these all with thee,
 And with them sanctify thyself, and pay
 What may be requisite to shave their heads.
 Thus all the world will know and be convinced,

(1) In Greek, *myriads*; (*ποσαι μυριάδες*); each myriad numbered ten thousand; which shows how numerous the faithful were in Jerusalem. Still the majority of the inhabitants were incredulous. When St. Paul, speaking to the Jews, says, "*if some among you have been incredulous*,"—this expression, taken in its literal acceptance, would insinuate that the believers were in the majority. This is not, however, meant; but, nevertheless, it shows that the faithful formed a very great proportion of the people.

(2) The vow of the Nazarenes, of which I spoke above. The vow was purely of devotion, but instituted by the Almighty, as related in Numbers vi. St. Paul evinced more attachment to Judaism by observing it, than if he had confined himself to a rigid observation; just as among us, by vowing to keep the evangelical counsels, we give a greater mark of our love of Christianity, than by merely fulfilling its precepts. St. Paul gave a new proof of his zeal for the Mosaic observances, by defraying the expenses incurred. This devotion was not unusual with the Jews; and we see it imitated by Christians, who cause others to make pilgrimages on their account, of which they themselves pay all the expenses.

That what they heard concerning thee is false ;
That, on the contrary, thou art thyself
Observant of the law. Now, what regards
The Gentiles who believe, we have decreed
That they refrain from all polluted meats,
From fornication, strangled things, and blood."

The law abolished was not yet reprov'd,—
A thing indifferent—or to be observed,
Or else rejected, as might be required.
Hence Paul acceded to the Ancients' will,
And with him took the vow-devoted men,
With whom he purified himself next day.
Entering the temple, notice he proclaimed
Of the fulfilment of the wonted time,
'Till an oblation should be made for all.

The seven days were drawing to their close,
When certain Jews, from Asia who had come,
Seeing him in the temple, furious, roused
The populace and seized him, crying out :
"Help ! men of Israel, help ! this is the man
Who teacheth every where against our race,
Our law, our temple,—and Gentiles bringing in,
Hath violated this most holy place."

(For with him, in the city, having seen
The Ephesian, Trophimus, the rumor spread,
That to the temple Paul had taken him.)
The city was in uproar ; wildly ran
The multitude together. Paul they seized,

And dragging him from out the temple, closed
Immediately the gates, and were about
To slay him on the spot, when tidings reached
The Tribune of the band, that tumult raged,
And vast confusion, in Jerusalem.
With soldiers and centurions he ran
To where the crowds had gathered ; and the men,
Seeing the Tribune and the soldiers, ceased
To menace Paul, or beat, as they had done.
The Tribune coming took him, with two chains (1)
Fettering his hands and feet ; and then inquired
Who was the prisoner, and what his crime.
But from the murmuring crowd naught could be
heard :
Some hoarsely one thing, some another, cried.
Finding, amid this dense, tumultuous mob,
Naught certain could be learned, he gave command,
That to the castle Paul should be conveyed. (2)
And when the stairs he reached, it came to pass,
That by the soldiers he was carried up ;
Such was the violence of the multitude,
Rending the welkin with—" Away with him !"

(1) According to the prophecy of Agabus. The *two chains* were, one for his hands, the other for his feet. In consequence of that on his feet, the soldiers were obliged to carry him up the steps of the fortress, as he could not mount quickly enough to escape the violence of the people.

(2) The castle *Antonia*. It was near the temple ; and from the summit of its towers every thing passing near the temple could be seen. Herod the Great had embellished and fortified it. He called it *Antonia*, from Mark Antony.

Upon the threshold standing, ere the gates
 Were opened of the castle, Paul begged leave
 One word to speak : " May I say something to thee ?"
 In Greek he then addressed the Tribune. " What !
 Canst thou speak Greek ?" the Tribune asked, amazed.
 " Art thou not the Egyptian, (1) who didst rouse,
 Before these days, the tumult of a mob,
 Seditious, and into the desert lead
 Four thousand murderers ?" Paul responded, " No :
 From Egypt I came not. I am a Jew
 Of Tarsus in Cilicia,—no mean place,—
 Of which I am a citizen. And now
 I pray thee to the people let me speak."
 Assent the Tribune granted : on the steps
 Paul to the people beckoned with his hands.
 Suddenly deep silence being made,
 He thus spake to them in the Hebrew tongue :
 " Brethren and fathers ! hear the account I give." (2)
 (Who, when they heard the intrepid prisoner speak
 In Hebrew, still more silently gave ear.)
 " I am a Jew : the city of my birth
 Is Tarsus in Cilicia : but here

(1) Josephus and Eusebius make mention of this Egyptian,
 who, with four thousand men, went out from Egypt. He was a
 false prophet and magician, who promised his followers that by
 one word he would make the walls of Jerusalem totter to the
 ground. Felix sent an army against him, who slew many of his
 followers, and took a great number of prisoners. The Egyptian
 disappeared, and we know not what became of him. The Tri-
 bune very reasonably conjectured that Paul might be this impos-
 ter, so justly and universally detested.

(2) Chap. xxii.

Was brought up—in Jerusalem—and taught
 The law of Moses, at Gamaliel's feet, (1)
 And the true spirit of our fathers' law :
 And, zealous for that law, as ye this day,
 Even unto death I persecuted those
 Who walked the way which I am following now ;
 Binding them all with chains, women and men,
 And dooming them to prisons—as is known
 To the High Priest and Ancients of the law, (2)
 Who will bear testimony ; for by them
 Letters were given me to our distant brethren,
 With which I started for Damasens, thence
 To bring, in fetters, to Jerusalem,
 All I could seize upon, that duly here
 They might be punished. When upon the way—
 As drawing nigh that city—about noon, (3)

(1) In the east, the disciples sit on mats at the feet of their masters. Hence the expression, *to approach the feet of any one*, that is, to become the disciple of any one. (See Deuteronomy xxxiii. 3.) Mary the sister of Martha, *sat at the feet of Jesus*, hearing his word. (Luke x. 39.) Gamaliel is the doctor of whom mention is made above, (Acts v.)

(2) The Chief Priest, at this time, was not the same as the one who gave the letters to Paul ; and the Apostle was either not aware that the dignity had passed to another, or he appealed to the successor of the former, as having it in his power to substantiate the fact which he mentions. The Greek word which the Vulgate translates *Ancients*, means, literally, the *sacerdotal senate*.

(3) The circumstance of its being noon, proves that the light came from heaven, and was miraculous. We may conceive that, during the night, certain shining appearances might be formed from the exhalations of the earth, which become inflamed in the air : but the brilliant light with which St. Paul was struck blind in full day, must have been supernatural.

A sudden, brilliant light shone out from heaven,
 Encompassing me round ; and falling down.
 I heard a voice bursting upon my ear :
'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me thus ?'
 I answered, *'Lord, who art thou ?'* and he said,
'Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.'
 They who were with me saw, indeed, the light, (1)
 But did not hear the voice. *'What shall I do,*
O Lord ?' I asked. *'Arise,'* the Lord replied :
'Go to Damascus, where thou shalt be told
The things that thou must do.' Meanwhile the light
 So dazzling, blinded me ; I could not see.
 But my companions, leading by the hand,
 Brought me into Damascus ; where a man
 Named Ananias, following the law,
 And irreproachable among the Jews,
 Came unto me, and standing by me, said :
'Look, brother Saul, at me :' I looked, as bid : (2)
'Our fathers' God,' he added, *'hath ordained,*
That thou shouldst know his will, thou shouldst behold
The Just One, and the voice from his own mouth (3)
Shouldst hear ; for thou a witness to all men
Shalt be of things which thou hast seen and heard.

(1) He here declares what voice was not heard ; namely, the voice of Him who spake ; for they heard Paul's voice, since it is said (chap. ix.) that they heard a voice.

(2) He looked up, and saw ; because, at the first sound of Ananias' voice, he recovered his sight miraculously. (See chap. ix.)

(3) Jesus Christ is called the JUST ONE, by excellence ; because he is essentially just, and all justice is derived from him. Jesus Christ is made unto us justice and sanctification, as St Paul declares.

*Why then delay? Rise up, and be baptized,
 Invoke his name, and wash away thy sins.'* (1)
 Returning to Jerusalem, it chanced,
 While praying in the temple, that my mind
 Was in a trance enraptured, and I saw
 The Lord, who said unto me: '*Haste,
 And leave Jerusalem—for they will not
 Concerning me thy testimony take.*'
 'Lord,' I returned, '*they know full well themselves,
 That I immured in prison and chastised
 Those who believed, in every synagogue;
 And when thy witness Stephen's blood was shed,
 That I stood by, consenting, and the robes
 Of those who killed him kept beneath my care.*'
 But said the Lord, '*Depart: for I will send
 Thee to the Gentile nations far away.*'" (2)

Silent the people listened, till the word
 "Gentiles" dropped from his lips; when sudden
 burst
 A cry uproarious from the maddened crowds:
 "Away with such a man! upon the earth (3)

(1) Baptism effaces sin, and remits the temporal punishment due to sins, both original and actual.

(2) St. Paul, since his conversion, had made three journeys to Jerusalem. In which of these he had his trance, interpreters do not agree. It is pretty evident that it was not in the third, which was the present. It seems more probable that it happened in the first, immediately after he began his mission among the Gentiles.

(3) St. Peter, who reproached them with their crimes, made many thousand converts. St. Paul, who speaks to them with the greatest caution, only enrages them. We may regard, as the

'Twere wrong that he should live !" Amid these cries
 Their garments they cast off, and filled the air (1)
 With clouds of dust upthrown. The Tribune, then,
 Commanded that the prisoner should be brought
 Into the castle-walls, and there be scourged
 And tortured, to compel him to reveal
 The cause of all this tumult ; for the tongue (2)
 In which Paul spake, he did not understand.
 Thongs were already round his body tied,
 When the Centurion nigh Paul thus addressed :
 "Can, then, a Roman citizen be scourged,
 Untried and uncondemned ?" Which having heard,
 Quick to the Tribune the Centurion
 Repaired, inquiring if he knew that Paul,
 Condemned to torture, was a citizen
 Of Rome ? To him the Tribune hurrying came :
 "Tell me, art thou a Roman citizen ?"
 He asked. Paul sternly answered, "Yes."
 "The right of citizen dearly I have bought,"
 The Tribune added. "I am so by birth,"
 Responded Paul : and they who stood prepared

principal cause of this difference, their different vocations. "*He who appointed Peter the Apostle of circumcision, hath appointed me the Apostle of the Gentiles,*" says St. Paul, (Gal. xi.) Their great success was attached to their especial vocations. To this the words of the Lord seem to allude : "*Because they will not receive thy testimony concerning me, . . . unto the Gentiles afar I will send thee.*"

(1) Whether this was their ordinary manner of exhibiting their execration, or whether they were preparing to stone him, does not appear, very plain.

(2) We saw above, that Paul addressed the people in the Hebrew language, which the Roman Tribune did not understand.

To inflict the torture fled. The Tribune feared, (1)
 For having bound a Roman citizen.
 Desirous, on the morrow, to learn why
 The Jews had risen against him and accused,
 He loosed his chains, and ordered that the Priests,
 Together with the Council, should convene :
 Before whom thus assembled, Paul was brought. (2)
 And, casting round the hall a lofty gaze,
 He thus began : " My brethren, to this day,
 With a pure conscience in the sight of God, (3)
 Have I conversed "—here, interrupting him,
 The High Priest ordered those who near him stood, (4)
 To smite him on the mouth : whom, in a tone
 Of dread denunciation, he addressed :
 " God shall strike thee, thou whited wall ! To judge
 According to the law thou sittest there,
 And thou commandest, contrary to law,

(1) His fear teaches us that no one was safe who would maltreat a Roman citizen. The Emperors avenged his wrongs Claudius, on this account, deprived the Rhodians of their franchise.

(2) Chap. xxiii.

(3) St. Paul had always followed the dictates of his conscience, as well in Judaism as in the Church. The first conscience was erroneous—the second enlightened. He could easily justify the second, and the first could not be condemned by his enemies. There was always in his great soul an uprightness of purpose which moved the heart of God. This idea he himself throws out, in his first Epistle to Timothy : "*But I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief,*" (v. 13.)

(4) It was customary, when any one who was questioned by the Magistrates, deviated from the respect due to them, to order him to be struck. Paul did not ; and the order was instigated by brutal violence.

That they should strike me!" The bystanders cried:
 "Dost thou revile the High Priest of the Lord?"
 "Brethren, I knew him not to be the Priest (1)
 Of the Most High," respectfully he said;
 "For I remember what the law prescribes:
Thou shalt not speak reproachfully against
The ruler of the people." (2) Looking round,
 And seeing that the Council was composed
 Of Sadducees and Pharisees, alike,
 Raising his voice, "Brethren, I am," he cried,
 "A Pharisee—of Pharisees the son. (3)
 Touching the resurrection of the dead,
 And future hope beyond the dreary tomb—
 Am I in question called, and stand accused."

A great division in the Council rose,
 Upon this doctrine, 'mid the Sadducees

(1) St. Paul did not know him by sight, because he had just arrived at Jerusalem, after an absence of many years. The High Priest must not have been distinguished from the others present, either by the seat he occupied, or by dress; otherwise he would have been recognised. This was a convocation made by the Tribune, in which it is probable the ordinary formalities were not observed, either in regard to the place or to the ceremonial. Who knows but the Tribune himself occupied the first place?

(2) Exod. xxii. 28. What meekness on the part of St. Paul! Especially as it was by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, according to St. Chrysostom, that he made use of the preceding menace.

(3) He retained all that was good in that sect—the faith of the resurrection—and left them all their vices. He and the other Apostles announced a two-fold resurrection: that of Jesus Christ, and that of all mankind—the basis and perfection of the edifice of Christianity.

And Pharisees. The former seet denied
 The resurrection, angels, and the soul: (1)
 The latter, on the contrary, believed.
 The din of controversy louder grew:
 Amidst the noise some Pharisees stood up,
 And "striving," said: "No evil in this man
 We find; and who can tell but that some spirit
 Or angel may have spoken unto him?"

Fiereer and hotter the dissension waxed;
 And fearing lest, amid the tumult, Paul
 In pieces should be torn, the Tribune bade
 The soldiers to descend, and from the crowd
 To rescue him by force, and lead him up
 Into the castle, where he was secured.

The following night, reposing in his cell,
 And pondering, sleepless, o'er the ills and pains
 Which he was destined to sustain, the Lord
 Stood by him, in a vision, and spake thus:
 "Be constant—in Jerusalem thou hast
 Borne witness of me, so must thou at Rome." (2)

(1) They denied the spirituality of the soul. The animal man believes in the existence of a body only. This stupidity produced paganism, materialism, and we may add, atheism.

(2) It had already been revealed to Paul that he should go to Rome, (chap. xix. 21.) Christ here confirms it; and because he gave testimony of his faith in Jerusalem, he promises that he shall do the same at Rome. One trial is repaid by another; and one combat will be the price of another. Thus does God recompense, in generous souls, one merit by another merit; thus does he multiply their victories, and enrich their crowns.

On the gray mountains day had hardly dawned,
 Ere many of the Jews convened, and vowed,
 And with united imprecations swore
 To eat not, drink not, until Paul be slain.
 In this conspiracy were forty men. (1)
 These coming to the Ancients and Chief Priests,
 Declared: "By vow we—every man—are bound,
 With maledictions, nor to eat nor drink,
 Till Paul be put to death: to accomplish this,
 You and the Council must persuade the Tribune
 To bring him forth again, under pretext
 Of knowing something more concerning him.
 We are all ready to discharge our part;
 And ere he reach the Council, on the way
 We will surprise him, and our vow fulfil."

But there was one—a fair and gentle youth—
 Whose eye was watchful of the treacherous snares
 Laid by these wicked men: Paul's nephew he.
 He saw the danger, and, with anxious heart,
 Gained entrance to the castle, and to Paul,
 Magnanimous, the fatal plot revealed.
 The voice which in the solitary cell
 Had cheered his soul for nobler triumphs yet
 Upon the hills of Rome, all present fear
 Of being slain extinguished in his breast.
 And though no human agency were nigh

(1) It is generally believed that these conspirators—*about* forty in number—were Sadducees. When such men have the power, they cry out, *Massacre the enemy!* when they have not, they allow *all the world liberty of opinion!*

To save him from the danger, Heaven would spread
Its ægis o'er him, and confound his foes.
Yet human means by Providence were given.

Paul heard the tale, composed ; and calling one
Of the Centurions, "Take this youth," he said,
"Before the Tribune, for he would reveal
Some secret to him." Who without delay
Brought him before that officer, and told
What Paul had uttered : "Paul, the prisoner,
Desired that I should bring this youth to thee,
Who hath some weighty secret to disclose."

The Tribune, kindly taking by the hand
The ingenuous youth, aside with him retired,
And bade him fearlessly the secret tell.
"Tis this," he answered. "Many of the Jews
Have formed a plot whereby they may persuade,
With treacherous cunning, thee to bring forth Paul
Upon the morrow, as if to inquire they meant
More certainly concerning him : beware
Lest thou give credence to them ; for there lie
Upwards of forty men in ambush, bound
By solemn oath, neither to eat nor drink,
Till they have killed him. All their plans matured,
They merely wait thy answer, in suspense."

The Tribune, charging him to tell no man
That he had thus informed, dismissed the youth.
Sending for two Centurions then, he said :
"Get ready, for the third hour of the night,

Two hundred soldiers, horsemen seventy,
 Spear-men two hundred,—to proceed as far
 As Cæsarea ; beasts, likewise, provide,
 And set Paul on, whom carefully escort (1)
 To Felix, Governor of that place ;" (he feared
 The Jews might kill him, and himself be charged
 With having—bought by bribery—connived.)
 Meanwhile to Felix, in these terms, he wrote :
 " To Felix, Governor most excellent,
 This letter Claudius Lysias, greeting, sends.
 Upon this man the Jews, tumultuous, seized,
 Resolved to slay him ; but amid the crowds,
 With my brave troops, I threw myself, and thus—
 Knowing he was a Roman citizen— (2)
 I rescued him. Determined, then, to learn
 What was their accusation, what his crime,
 Before their Council I arraigned the man,
 And after due investigation, found
 The charges turned on questions of their law ;
 That of no deed was he impeached, whereby
 He should be doomed to prison or to death.

(1) God did not wish St. Paul to become a victim to these infuriated wretches. See how, without appearing to act in the matter, his providence protects and saves the Apostle. Admire and adore the ways of providence.

(2) This was a falsehood. When he rescued Paul from their fury, he was not yet aware that he was a Roman citizen. If we look to ourselves, we will find that self-love causes us to tell such falsehoods in thousands. A false circumstance, if but favorable to ourselves, flows from the lips or the pen like water from its source : it is only necessary that untruth present itself in the garb of beautiful words ; and very often it will be preferred to truth not so agreeably set forth

Having since been informed that snares are laid
By some conspirators to take his life,
To thee I have consigned him, before whom
All accusations may be heard.—Farewell.”

The troops, as ordered, left Jerusalem
With Paul, whom to Antipatris by night (1)
They took ; where to the horsemen leaving him,
Back to the castle they next day returned.
At Cæsarea when the horsemen came,
The letter to the Governor they gave,
And Paul the prisoner to his hands consigned.
The letter Felix cautiously perused ;
Then, “ To what province Paul belonged ? ” inquired.
Learning it was Cilicia, “ I will hear
Thy statement when the accusers shall have come,”
He said.—Meanwhile commanding Paul to be
In Herod’s judgment-hall securely kept.

Five days he there remained. When they expired, (2)

(1) It is supposed that this was the ancient Capharsalama, mentioned in the first book of Maccabees, vii. 31. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named *Antipatris*, after his father Antipater. It was situated on the Mediterranean Sea, equi-distant from Joppa and Cæsarea, and about seventeen leagues from Jerusalem. So long a journey could not have been made in one night. St. Luke measures a day from one evening to the other—a mode much in use among the Jews, and authorized by the Holy Scriptures.

(2) Chap. xxiv. *Five days after* the beginning of this affair ; that is, after St. Paul had been arrested at Jerusalem—which, added to the seven since his arrival at Cæsarea, make the *twelve* days to which he will refer below, (chap. xxiv. 2.)

The High Priest, Ananias, of the Jews,
 With several Ancients, and an Orator, (1)
 By name Tertullus, came down to depose
 Against the prisoner: equipped, before
 The Governor's tribunal they appeared.
 Paul was arraigned; when thus the charge preferred
 Tertullus: "If throughout our favored land
 A general peace hath reigned; if numerous ills
 Have been removed, we owe it all to thee,
 Illustrious Felix! and such blessings claim
 Always and everywhere our grateful thanks.
 But not too tedious to become, give ear
 With thy accustomed clemency, I pray,
 To a brief charge: this man now standing here,
 Hath been reputed as a public pest.
 Where'er the Jews are found, throughout the world,
 Among them fierce seditions he hath raised;
 And lately through the sect of Nazarenes
 Tumult excited, and hath gone about
 The holy temple to profane. We seized
 Upon his person, therefore, with the intent
 Of judging him according to our law. (2)
 But Lysias the Tribune rushing in,
 Rescued him violently from our hands,

(1) 'This is a Latin name. It is probable that Tertullus was a Jew, born at Rome, whom the Jews employed as their orator before the Roman governors, who did not understand Hebrew, or Syriac. The first sentence of his speech shows that this man was an haranguer by profession.

(2) Not so: they meant to massacre him without any legal process. This whole speech is a tissue of falsehoods, and will be convincingly confuted by St. Paul himself.

Commanding his accusers before thee
 Their charges to allege; of which from them (1)
 Thou canst thyself with certainty inform."
 Tertullus' statement all the Jews confirmed.

Then Paul, (the Governor motioning to him
 That he might answer,) thus undaunted, spake:
 "Knowing that thou hast been, for many years,
 Judge of this nation, (2) in my own defence
 With courage will I answer. Understand,
 That twelve years—and not more—have now elapsed,
 Since in Jerusalem to adore I went.
 Nor ever in the temple was I found
 With any one disputing; nor have roused
 The people to sedition any where,
 Or in the city or the synagogues.
 The charges here alleged they cannot prove.
 Yet one thing I acknowledge: that I serve

(1) "*Him*," here, is somewhat ambiguous, as it may refer either to Paul or to Lysias. It should be understood of the latter. Felix, it appears, so understood it, for he concluded by saying: "I will hear thee when the Tribune Lysias shall have arrived."

(2) *Judge*—that is to say, governor. The Jews were much in the habit of giving the name of Judge to any magistrate having the sovereign administration of affairs; which might have been handed down from their first Judges, before the appointment of Kings.

St. Paul says that he will plead his cause with the more confidence, *because he knows* that Felix had been a Judge for many years. We cannot see the foundation of this consequence, as it is known that the administration of Felix was but a tissue of murders, injustice, and rapine. Nevertheless, although we do not see it, this must have been a reasonable motive of confidence, he

According to the sect styled *heresy*, (1)
 The Father and my God ; believing all
 Which in the law and prophets is contained ;
 Hoping in God, as they themselves do hope,
 A resurrection of the good and bad.
 With this conviction, 'tis my studious care,
 Always without offence towards God and men,
 A conscience to preserve. For many years,
 With alms, and vows, and offerings I came
 Among my nation : occupied with these,
 They found me in the temple, purified,
 But with no tumult and no multitude.
 And they, besides, who found me there were Jews (2)
 Of Asia, who ought now to face me here,
 And in thy presence every charge prefer,
 If they have aught against me : or let these
 Who are here present speak, if any crime
 I have been guilty of, save that I cried,

cause he affirms it : otherwise it would be but a compliment ; and assuredly St. Paul was no flatterer.

(1) The words *sect* and *heresy* had not always, among the Jews, the bad meaning we attach to them. Sometimes, however, they had, as we infer from the manner in which St. Paul alludes to them. Let us imitate the example of this great Apostle, and strengthen our souls against the temptations of the world with the hope of the resurrection.

(2) St. Paul dexterously takes advantage of the absence of the Asiatic Jews, that is, those of Ephesus. They were the first, or rather the only witnesses that should be heard, because they were the first to recognise him in the temple, laid hands on him, and excited the people. They wisely kept themselves aloof. Perhaps they feared that the accusation of tumult would fall upon their own heads. A wicked judge is always formidable to the guilty, when he has no interest to be unjust.

Standing among them : ' I am judged to-day,
Touching the resurrection of the dead.' "

Paul spake. Confounded his accusers stood,
And silenced in the Council. Whereupon
Felix, who had a knowledge of this way, (1)
Dismissed them, saying, " Further I will hear,
When Lysias the tribune shall come down."
Though of the prisoner's innocence convinced,
He did not, vacillating, set him free,
As justice and humanity required,
But to the custody intrusted him
Of a Centurion, whom, meanwhile, he bade
To treat Paul gently, nor prevent his friends
From rendering him their soothing ministry.

Some days elapsed, when Felix, with his wife
Drusilla, (she a Jewess was,) returned, (2)
And sent for Paul, and heard him o'er again
Speak of the faith that is in JESUS CHRIST.
Wondering they listened, as in strains sublime,

(1) *This way of life*—that is, Christianity. Felix knew well that its followers were irreproachable.

(2) Drusilla was by birth a Jewess, but of an Idumean race, as she was connected with the family of Herod. Her father was Agrippa I., who beheaded St. John. Her first husband was Azizus, king of Emesa. Felix, fascinated by her beauty, induced her to forsake Azizus, and unite herself to him. With Felix, she was a pagan. Curiosity induced her to hear St. Paul. Suetonius says that Felix had been the husband of three queens. Drusilla perished in an eruption of Vesuvius, together with her son Agrippa by Felix. It was in this same eruption that Pliny the elder was buried.

The Apostle told them of that glorious creed :
 But when of justice he began to treat, (1)
 And chastity, and judgment after death,
 Felix was terrified : "Thou mayest now go,"
 He said, "until a more convenient time."

From Paul he labored money to extort ;
 And for this purpose oft conversed with him.
 Two years—the term of Felix—now expired,
 And Portius Festus occupied his seat ;
 But Felix, studious the Jews to please,
 Still left the Apostle in his prison bound. (2)

(1) We behold here the magnanimity of St. Paul. His life was at the disposal of Felix, and yet he dares to treat, in his presence, of two points most capable of exciting the indignation of his perverse mind and corrupt heart—chastity and justice. He would have made little impression, if he had stopped there. The most beautiful moral is but a useless speculation, if it be not accompanied by an inevitable judgment, where virtue will be crowned and vice punished. Felix trembled : this was the beginning of grace. His terror caused him to silence Paul—this was the end of it.

(2) If Paul had given him money, he would have set the Apostle at liberty ; and because he wished to conciliate the Jews, he left him in prison. But he obtained nothing from Paul, and nothing from the Jews, who sent a deputation to Rome, accusing him in the name of the nation.

He would have fallen had it not been for the credit of his brother Pallas, who, like himself, was an Arcadian by birth, and a slave ; but being freed by the Emperor Claudius, Pallas became, by the ascendancy which he exercised over his master, the most influential man in the empire ; and having obtained the freedom of Felix, raised him to dignity. Afterwards they proclaimed themselves the descendants of the ancient Kings of Arcadia. The people mocked them : but they had the baseness to recognise, by an au-

Now to the province Festus having come, (1)
 From Cæsarea to Jerusalem went (2)
 After three days ; where, by the Chief Priests met,
 And by the leading Jews, much against Paul
 He heard ; all, as a favor, calling out
 That he should be commanded to return,
 A prisoner, to Jerusalem ; laying wait,
 Meantime, to cut him off upon the way.
 But Festus answered : “ Paul hath been detained
 At Cæsarea—whither, very soon,
 I purpose to repair : let, then, all those
 Who have authority among you go,
 Armed with their accusations, down with me,
 And if the man be guilty, prove his guilt.

About a week did Festus, in effect,
 Spend in Jerusalem ; whence he returned
 To Cæsarea, and, the following day,
 The judgment-seat ascending, he arraigned
 The prisoner Paul ; about whom stood the Jews,
 Who—his accusers—from Jerusalem
 Had come, objecting many grievous crimes,
 Which they could prove not : to whom Paul re-
 plied, (3)

thentic act, this ridiculous pretension. When the great are influenced by fear or hope, they become the most grovelling of men.

(1) Chap. xxv.

(2) Cæsarea was the residence of the governors, and in this respect regarded as a Roman province, the capital of Judea.

(3) Festus was perfectly convinced of the innocence of St. Paul, otherwise he would have incontinently condemned him to death. The feelings of the Jews against the Roman power are

"In naught have I against the Jewish law,
 Against the holy temple, or against
 Cæsar offended." Festus, hoping then
 The Jewish people to conciliate,
 Demanded: "Art thou willing, Paul, to go
 Back to Jerusalem, and duly there,
 Before me, of these several things be judged?"
 "At Cæsar's judgment-seat I stand," he said,
 "And at this judgment-seat should I be tried.
 No injury have I done unto the Jews,
 As thou well knowest. If I had injured them,
 Or had been guilty found of any deed
 Worthy of death, I should not fear to die.
 If I be innocent of the crimes alleged,
 Thou hast no right to hand me o'er to them.
 To Cæsar I appeal." (1) Festus, disturbed,
 Consulted with the Council, and then said:
 "Hast thou appealed to Cæsar? Then to Cæsar
 Shalt thou be sent." From his perplexity
 Festus was thus delivered,—to absolve
 Or to condemn. But little did he know,
 That by his conduct he prepared the way
 Whereby the prophecy should be fulfilled—
 That Paul should carry to the Gentiles far,
 To Israel's children, and the kings of earth,

well known; so is the doctrine of submission to all power, inculcated by St. Paul: and yet these same Jews had the hardihood to accuse him of revolting against Cæsar. Passion knows no moderation.

(1) Every Roman citizen, when accused of crime in the provinces, had a right to appeal to the Emperor in person; and, to this end, he was conducted to Rome under a strong guard.

The tidings of the Gospel,—for he was
The vessel of election to the Lord.

Some days passed o'er, when king Agrippa came,
Attended by Bernice, to salute (1)
Festus at Cæsarea. And as there
For several days they tarried, Festus told
The King of Paul. "A certain man," he said,
"Is here by Felix left a prisoner,
Of whom, when lately at Jerusalem,
I heard much sore complaint from the Chief Priests
And Ancients of the people, calling loud
For condemnation on him. I replied,
The Roman laws and usages forbid
That any citizen should be condemned,
Till his accusers meet him face to face,
And he have liberty in his defence
To speak, and clear himself of every charge.

"They came as summoned. And without delay
Mounting the judgment-seat, I ordered him
To be arraigned. The accusers, too, appeared,
But charged him with no crime whereby his guilt

(1) The young Agrippa, son of Herod Agrippa, brother of Drusilla, of whom we have spoken before, and of Berenice, or Bernice, who was then the widow of his uncle Herod, King of Chaldaea. She then espoused Ptolemon, King of Cilicia, whom she deserted, and became the mistress of Titus, who would have married her, had he not been prevented by the murmurs of the Roman people. Every age, alas! is but the repetition of the crimes of its predecessor. How many have we not to deplore, similar to that of Berenice, in the midst of Christianity!

Might be established. All they could allege,
 Was touching certain questions and disputes
 Of their own superstition, (1) and of one
 Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be
 Alive. Unable, therefore, to decide
 In questions of this nature, I proposed
 That to Jerusalem he should proceed,
 And there upon these several heads be judged.
 But Paul to Cæsar's hearing hath appealed.
 And I gave orders that he be confined,
 Until to Cæsar he be duly sent." (2)

"A wondrous character must this Paul be,"
 Returned Agrippa. "Nor will I conceal

(1) Was it not a want of respect for Agrippa, to style *superstition* the religion he professed? Or rather, did not Festus show the little consideration in which the Roman governors held these petty things, whom the Emperors made and unmade at pleasure?

He judged Paul guiltless, on account of the little importance he set upon the chief point of accusation. In this particular he was mistaken. It was a capital affair; and if it had not been true that Jesus was living, Paul would have deserved death, as a disturber of the public peace, and a declared aggressor of a religion of which God was the author. But a pagan could not understand this.

(2) Every one knows that all the Emperors were called by the name of Cæsar and Augustus. The present was Nero—but in the beginning of his reign, before he became the persecutor of Christianity, and a monster in human shape. The sword which was polluted with innocent blood, he at last turned against himself, as *Vaniere* sings:

In sua convertit ferrum præcordia, postquam
 Vix alium tollat quem ferus ensis habet.

That I would also hear the man myself."

Festus replied: "To-morrow thou shalt hear him."

Bright shone the day upon the columns tall
Which stood, majestic and erect, before
The hall of audience, when, with gorgeous pomp,
Agrippa and Bernice, with a train
Of Tribunes, and the chief men of the place,
Magnificently entered. Paul was brought
By Festus' order; and sublimely meek
And grandly humble, stood he in that glare.

Then Festus: "King Agrippa, and all ye
Who are here present with us, you behold
This famous man, concerning whom the Jews
Complained to me when at Jerusalem;
Urging his condemnation; crying out,
That he should live no longer. I have found
Nothing that he hath done worthy of death.
But to Augustus as he hath appealed,
To Rome he shall be sent: yet have I naught
Decisive to the Emperor to write. (1)
Wherefore amidst you I have brought him forth,
And in thy presence, king Agrippa, first,
That he may be examined: for to me
Unreasonable it seemeth and unjust
To send a prisoner, and not signify
The crime precise of which he stands accused."

(1) In Latin, *Domino*. The title *Lord* was given to the Emperors when addressing them, or writing to them, as we see from the letters of Pliny to Trajan. Augustus refused the epithet

Agrippa then, addressing Paul, returned : (1)
 "Thou art permitted for thyself to speak."
 When, stretching forth his hand, with mien inspired,
 His answer Paul began : "I deem myself, (2)
 O King Agrippa, happy on this day,
 That I can speak before thee of the things
 Whereof the Jews accuse me ;—the more so,
 As both the customs and the questions all
 That are among the Jews thou knowest well :
 Wherefore, I pray thee, patiently give ear.
 My life, indeed, from early youth hath been
 With my own nation in Jerusalem,
 As all the Jews do know ; for from that time,
 They must admit, (would they but testify,)
 I lived according to the more sure sect
 Of our religion, a strict Pharisee.
 And subject now to judgment do I stand,
 For hoping in the promise by the Lord (3)

through modesty : now-a-days it has become so common, that every plebeian expects it. Times and things change.

(1) Chap. xxvi.

(2) The appeal being admitted, St. Paul had no judges here. Agrippa induced him to speak, merely to have the pleasure of hearing him, and Festus, in order to elicit some explanation which he might communicate to the Emperor. Hence he does not address Festus, as he would have been obliged to do, if the Governor had still been his judge. Festus, no doubt, desired, by way of compliment, that all the honor of the conference should be given to the King, who was his guest, and for whose gratification it was intended. St. Paul did not suffer so auspicious an opportunity to pass unimproved.

(3) The promise of the Messiah, who was to be the liberator and Saviour of his people.

Made to our fathers, unto which our tribes,
 Serving him day and night, expect to come.
 'Tis for this hope, O king, I am accused.
 Why is it thought a thing incredible, (1)
 That God should raise the dead to life again?
 I, too, was blinded once; nay, I believed
 It was my duty many things to do
 Against the name of Him of Nazareth.
 Which at Jerusalem I did; and many saints
 Shut up in prison, having power obtained
 From the Chief Priests; and when to death con-
 demned,
 The sentence I exultingly announced.
 Oft, by inflicting punishments severe
 In every synagogue, reckless, I strove
 To force them to blaspheme; (2) and yet more mad,
 Pursued them even unto foreign towns.
 Wherefore, with full power and approval armed
 By the Chief Priests, I started for Damascus.
 While on my route, at mid-day, I perceived,

(1) It has been believed that these words were addressed to those in the assembly who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and not to the Pharisees, who believed it. St. Paul might have addressed both one and the other. To the first he signified, "You are in contradiction with yourselves, if, acknowledging an all-powerful God, you do not admit his power to raise up the dead." To the second he signified, "You are inconsistent, if, believing the general resurrection, you deny, without examining, the particular resurrection of Jesus Christ. Following your principles, you should not deny without investigating the proofs."

(2) That is, he had the misfortune to make both martyrs and apostates; a subject of humiliation and regret.

O king, a light more brilliant than the sun,
 Blazing from heaven about me and the men
 Who journeyed in my company : when all
 Were stricken suddenly down upon the ground.
 A voice I heard, then, in the Hebrew tongue : (1)
'Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me thus ?'
 Against the goad 'tis hard for thee to kick.
 'Who art thou, Lord ?' I asked. The voice replied :
*'Jesus, whom thou dost persecute : but rise
 And stand upon thy feet. I have appeared,
 A minister to make thee of those things
 Which thou hast seen, and witness, too, of those
 Wherein I will appear ; delivering thee
 Out of the people and the nations' hands
 To which I send thee now, their eyes to open,
 That they from darkness unto light may be
 Converted, and from Satan's power to God,
 That pardon of their sins they may receive,
 By faith that is in me, and have a lot
 Among the saints.'* To this celestial sight
 I was not skeptic, (2) king Agrippa ; but
 First to the people of Damascus preached,
 As heaven commanded ;—at Jerusalem,
 Throughout Judea, to the Gentile race,

(1) St. Paul, it appears from this expression, did not address Agrippa in Hebrew, but in Greek or Latin.

(2) The Greek word (*ἀπίστος*) signifies something more than *not incredulous* : it implies not only assent, but likewise obedience. We remarked above, that St. Paul had resided twice at Damascus, and that he passed the interval—not less than two years—in Arabia, perhaps leading a solitary life : for among the places where he began to preach, Arabia is not named.

Penance, conversion to the Lord, and fruits
Worthy of penance. This is all the cause
Why in the temple I was seized upon,
With tumult, by the Jews, who then conspired
To slay me : but with God's almighty aid
I stand, unto this day, to small and great,
Witnessing, and saying openly those things
Which all the prophets had announced of yore,
And Moses, in due time should come to pass,—
That CHRIST should suffer, and should rise again,
First-born among the dead, and light divine
To Israel's children and the Gentiles show."

While in this strain of eloquence inspired,
Paul still was arguing, with amazement struck
Festus exclaimed : "Thou art beside thyself!
Yea, too much learning, Paul, doth make thee mad!"
"I am not mad, most excellent Felix ! no :
I speak the words of truth and soberness.
For of these things of which I tell, the King
Well knoweth, and with confidence to him
I also speak ; from whom they are not hid—
For in a corner they have not been done."

Then turning to Agrippa, "King," he asked,
"Believest thou the prophets ? Yes, I know
That thou believest." Half convinced, the King,
Starting with admiration, answered : "Paul,
A little more, and thou persuadest me
To be a Christian!" "Would to God, O King!"
Paul answered, "in a little and in much,

That thou, and all who hear my voice this day,
Should as I am become, except these bands." (1)

Amid these ardent aspirations breathed
By the pure zeal of Paul, the assembly rose :
The King, the Governor, Bernice, and
The glittering train around them. As they left,
Among themselves discussing : " Naught," they said,
" Hath this man done worthy of death or chains."
Agrippa owned to Festus : " Had he not
Appealed to Cæsar, he might be discharged."

'Twas now determined into Italy (2)
That Paul by sea should instantly proceed,
With other prisoners, under Julius,
Centurion of the cohort which was called
Augusta. We embarked on board a ship (3)
Of Adrumetum, and the anchor weighed,
We sailed along the Asiatic coasts,
The Macedonian, Aristarchus, still (4)

(1) Why except his chains, since he regarded it an honor to bear them for Jesus Christ? For the very reason which Christ himself alleged : *All will not understand*, (Matt. xix.), and pearl must not be thrown to swine. Besides, he spoke to men who did not appreciate the high privilege of suffering in the cause of Christianity ; and, therefore, he longed for the happy consummation of their conversion—of their enjoying all the consolations, without being subject to the numberless trials in the faith of Jesus, which he had undergone.

(2) Chap. xxvii.

(3) *Adrumetum* was a port in Africa.

(4) He had followed Paul to Ephesus, then accompanied him in the voyage he made into Macedonia and Greece, continued

Continuing with us. On the following day
 We touched at Sidon : the Centurion,
 Humanely treating Paul, permitted him
 To see his friends, and for his wants provide.
 Thence spreading sail, we shaped our onward course
 Under the isle of Cyprus, for the winds
 Were adverse. Stretching, then, across the sea
 That through Pamphylia and Cilicia rolls,
 We came to Lystra—that of Lycia :— (1)
 A vessel from Alexandria there,
 Sailing for Italy, we found, on which
 By Julius we were placed. For many days
 We made but little headway, and scarce reached
 Gnidus ; the wind not suffering us, we then
 Sailed by Salmone, near the Cretan coast ; (2)
 Which hardly weathering, we at length attained
 A certain port, *Goodhavens* styled, near which
 The city of Thalassa boldly towers.
 Long there we tarried, for it was unsafe
 On sea to venture, as the fast was o'er. (3)

to Jerusalem from Cæsarea, and finally was imprisoned with him at Rome. He quitted him only when, having been ordained Bishop, St. Paul sent him to Thessalonica, where he died ; and is venerated as a Saint in the Roman Martyrology, on the 4th of August.

(1) *That of Lycia*, in order to distinguish it from Lystra in Lyeaonia, (see chap. xiv.) Ancient geographers do not mention Lystra in Lyeia. In the Greek MSS. it is *Myra* instead of Lystra.

(2) *Gnidus*, a town built on a promontory of Asia Minor, now called *Stodia*. Crete is at present styled Candia. Cape Salmone, the easterly point of the island, has preserved its name. Of the other places here mentioned, no traces remain.

(3) This was the fast of the Expiation, which occurred about

Meanwhile Paul solaced and advised them thus :
 "Ye men, our voyage now begins to be
 With injury and much damage to ourselves,
 And to the ship and lading." He proposed
 That for more prosperous weather they should wait.
 The pilot and the master of the ship (1)
 Julius consulted, and on them relied
 More than on Paul ; and as the port was deemed
 Unfit to winter in, the greatest part
 Counselling to sail thence, if, by any means,
 Phœnice they might reach—a Cretan port,
 Looking, on one side, towards the south and west,
 And on the other towards the west and north.
 A south wind gently springing up, 'twas thought
 Expedient to depart ; so we set sail
 From Asson, and along the coast of Crete
 We glided, when soon after there arose,
 Pregnant with storms, against the isle a wind
 Called Euro-aquilo, (2) in which the ship

the time of the September equinox. To say that the fast was over, was to signify that the season had set in when navigation was dangerous.

(1) As long as he did not regard St. Paul as inspired, it was the part of prudence to rely more on the pilot and captain than on him : but he soon found out that the knowledge that comes from heaven is more certain than that derived from our own reasoning and experience.

(2) In Greek, Εὐροχλιδέων, which signifies a stormy wind from the east, without determining whether from the northeast or southeast. But the author of the Vulgate, who lived in those times, could not be ignorant of the precise nature of this wind, and calls it northeast. This is an important point, for it adds great weight to the common opinion that the vessel landed at

Was furiously caught: against its force,
 Unable to bear up, we let her scud
 Before the gales tempestuous, and were driven
 Under the isle of Cauda, (1) where well nigh
 The boat was lost; which with great labor saved
 And taken up, we had recourse to helps, (2)
 And girding tight the vessel underneath
 With cables strong, lest she might strike upon (3)
 The quicksands near; the sail-yards taking down, (4)
 Left her to struggle with the driving winds.
 All night the tempest lashed her; and when day,
 Mantled in cloud and storm, arose again,
 The vessel, battered by the elements,

Malta, and not at Melida, which is in the gulf of Venice: We need but cast a glance over the map, to see that it is impossible for a vessel, driven on by so violent a northeast wind as to render it necessary to leave her to its fury,—impossible, I say, for that vessel to be blown on the coast of the isle of Crete, in the gulf of Venice.

(1) This was, perhaps, the small island to the west of Crete, called now Goza.

(2) *They used helps*, is the literal translation both from the Greek and Latin. It is ambiguous, and leaves a doubt whether it means that they made use of every aid the ship could afford, or that all the passengers were put in requisition, to manœuvre her with the sailors, as occurs in such storms.

(3) The cables with which the vessel was girt could not prevent it from striking, but could prevent it from going to pieces.

(4) The Latin text has *submisso vase*, which is confirmed by the Greek. Most interpreters translate *vase* by the *great mast*, (the “sail-yard” of the Douay version;) others by *the sail*, which, when it is inflated by the wind, seems to contain it in its concavity. The great sheet which was let down from heaven, in the vision of Peter, is called *vas*. This seems to confirm the second translation.

To ease and lighten, overboard they threw
 The cargo. Yet three days the storm increased,
 Till with their own hands they were forced to cast
 The tackling to the deep. Nor sun nor stars
 Shone through the day, or glittered through the night.
 Shrouded in gloom, the haggard skies were black ;
 The fury of the storm no power could stem ;
 All hope of safety perished in their breasts.
 No human aid could rescue them from wreck—
 Their fate seemed sealed—inevitably sealed,
 Had there not been at hand one friend of heaven,
 One powerful intercessor for them all.
 Paul raised his voice, amid the roaring sea,
 While all were spent with hunger and fatigue :
 “ Ye should, indeed, have hearkened, O ye men,
 While still at Crete : I warned you not to sail,
 And thereby bring this damage and this loss
 Upon us all. But yet be of good cheer :
 The ship will perish, but we shall be saved.
 For by my side an Angel of the God
 Whom I adore stood near, this night, and said :
 ‘ Fear not, O Paul : thou must be brought before
 Cæsar : and for thy sake, behold ! the Lord
 Will spare the lives of all who with thee now
 Are tossed upon these billows.’ Courage, sirs,
 For on the word of God my faith is fixed :
 Upon a certain island we shall land.” (1)

(1) It was not from humor, much less vanity, that he recalled to their minds the counsel he had given them. As if he had said : “ You would not believe me when I announced the misfortune that has overtaken you ; at least believe me now, while I

The fourteenth night now brooded o'er the dark
 And turbid Adriatic; on whose sea (1)
 Our ship was laboring, when amid the gloom,
 Straining their gaze, the ship-men deemed they saw
 The shadowy peaks of land; sounding, forthwith,
 They measured twenty fathoms; then again,
 A little farther, and fifteen they found.
 When, fearing on the breakers to be dashed,
 Four anchors from the vessel's stern they threw,
 Longing, impatient, for the dawn of day.

Meanwhile the ship-men, hoping to escape,
 Feigning to cast the anchors from the prow,
 Let down the boat. "Except within the ship
 These men remain," Paul to the soldiers said
 And the Centurion, "we cannot be saved." (2)
 They now at length believed him. From the boat
 The soldiers cut the ropes, and let her fall.

announce your rescue, which heaven has promised." He was speaking to idolaters, and hence the words, *whom I adore*: the true God, not like the deities of paganism. If that God would save them, *they* should acknowledge no other. The name of the island on which they were to land was not, perhaps, revealed by the Angel.

(1) This presents some difficulty with regard to their landing at Malta; for it is only the gulf of Venice that is called the Adriatic sea. But Strabo, a contemporary of St. Paul, informs us that it then included, besides the gulf of Venice, the Ionian and Sicilian seas, in which the island of Malta is situated.

(2) The accomplishment of the divine promise depended upon the remaining of the sailors in the ship, not absolutely, but because God, who had resolved to save them all, resolved to do so by natural means. What a magnificent example does not St. Paul present! Like Moses, he raised his hands to heaven, while

When light again broke in the stormy skies,
 Paul urged them to take meat. "This is," he said,
 "The fourteenth day that ye have anxious been,
 And, fasting, naught have eaten; wherefore take
 Some nourishment for health's sake: not a hair
 Shall perish of the head of any one." (1)
 He spake: and taking bread, gave thanks to God
 Before them all, and then began to eat. (2)
 Their courage quickening, they, likewise, took food.
 All being satisfied, they eased the ship,
 By casting to the billows all the wheat.
 Day broadened, and the highlands were descried;
 The coast they knew not—but a certain creek
 Was nigh that had a shore, to which they thought,
 If it was possible, to thrust the ship,
 They raised the anchors, loosed the "rudder-bands,"
 Again themselves committing to the sea.
 Then hoisting up the mainsail to the wind,
 They headed towards the shore; but having struck
 Against a strip of land, where two seas meet,
 The ship was run aground, and sticking fast,

the sailors were at work. They whose sole occupation it is to pray, if they pray with piety and fervor, are more useful to their country than others whose arms and minds are occupied in its service.

(1) That is, they had hardly eaten any thing, on account of their terror, which destroys appetite, and perhaps, too, the nausea created by the great agitation of the vessel. The number of souls in the vessel amounted to two hundred and seventy-six.

(2) Human respect often prevents Christians from performing their duties. St. Paul did not shrink from them in the company of idolaters. Does not God nourish us? Why, then, be ashamed to acknowledge his goodness before the world?

Deep in the sand remained immovable ;
 And soon, lashed by the fury of the waves,
 The stern broke into pieces ; whereupon
 The soldiers counselled that the prisoners
 (Lest, swimming from the wreck, some might escape,
 And they be censured) should be put to death.
 But the Centurion, willing to save Paul,
 Opposed the measure, ordering, meanwhile,
 Those who could swim to plunge into the sea,
 And make for land. The rest, some upon boards,
 Others on things belonging to the ship,
 Were carried : and thus did it come to pass,
 That every soul got safely to the land. (1)

When from the jaws of death we had escaped, (2)
 We learned the island was Melita called :
 There the barbarians no small courtesy (3)
 Extended to us all. Kindling a fire—
 For it was cold, and rain in torrents fell—
 They hastened to refresh us and to warm.
 It chanced, as Paul some fagots had picked up
 And laid upon the fire, that from the heat
 A viper gliding, fastened on his hand. (4)

(1) Thus the prediction of St. Paul was verified—that the ship should be lost, but all the passengers and sailors should be saved.

(2) Chap. xxviii.

(3) The word *barbarians*, in its first acceptation, means simply *strangers*. The Greeks and Romans applied this epithet to all nations who spoke a language different from their own. These were probably Africans, who had established themselves in Malta, near the coast of Africa.

(4) There are still serpents in Malta, but not poisonous

This beast when hanging the barbarians saw,
 They, terror-stricken, said: "Beyond all doubt
 A murderer is this man; whom, though the deep
 He hath escaped, yet vengeance still pursues." (1)
 But when he shook the viper off, unharmed,
 They saw him swell not from the poisonous sting,
 Nor suddenly fall dead before their eyes,
 As they expected, having changed their minds,
 They now imagined that he was a God. (2).

The chief man of the island, Publius named, (3)
 Held large possessions; who most courteously
 Received us in his house, where we remained
 During three days. Sick of a fever lay
 And spent with dysentery, at this time,

Whether the change is to be attributed to a miraculous influence, since the period when St. Paul was there, or not, it is not important to inquire.

(1) The sentiment of vindictive justice is common to the human breast. The impious man may deny it, but he cannot help fearing it.

(2) The people know no medium: they pass from one extreme to the other with surprising rapidity. Those of Lystra took St. Paul for a god, and the next day they stoned him. These regard him first as a murderer, and afterwards honor him as a deity.

(3) Publius is a Roman name. He is called, in Greek, the *first man*, and in Latin, *the prince* of the island. He was probably Governor, or first Magistrate, under the Prætor of Sicily, on which Malta depended. We are not informed of the fruits which the preaching of St. Paul produced in Malta. The tradition is, that he converted the whole country. This may be presumed from the zeal of the Apostle, and the blessing attached to his mission, especially among the Gentiles, as well as from the honors which were bestowed on him by the people of the island.

His father, whom Paul kindly visited ;
 And having prayed, upon the lingering man
 Imposed his hands, and healed him on the spot.
 The tidings of this wonder spread abroad,
 And all the sick throughout the island came
 To be restored to health—and all were cured.
 Wherefore great honors we received through Paul ;
 And when about departing from their shores,
 With all things necessary they supplied
 Our vessel for the voyage. We embarked—
 Having sojourned three months there—in a ship,
 Which, too, had wintered in this island, from
 Alexandria ; whose broad sign displayed
 The Castors. (1) Syracuse we quickly made, (2)
 And tarried there three days ; then near the shore
 Coasting along, to Rhegium we came. (3)
 Whence, on the second day, fresh southern winds
 Filling our sails, we made Puteoli ; (4)
 Where finding brethren, with them seven days
 We were desired to tarry. Then towards Rome
 Our way we bent. Whence, of us having heard,
 To the Appian Forum and the *Taverns Three* (5)
 The brethren came to meet us. Seeing these,

(1) Divinities of Rome, supposed to be favorable to navigators. Their images were painted on the prow or stern of the ship which took their name.

(2) The distance from Malta to Syracuse is short ; but from *Melita* very long.

(3) A city of Calabria.

(4) A maritime town, three leagues from Naples. Here they disembarked, and went by land to Rome.

(5) Small villages, which are no longer to be traced.



View of St. Angelo, Rome

Paul rendered thanks to God, and felt his breast
Glowing with courage, and inflamed with zeal.

And now the walls of Rome—imperial Rome—
Approached the undaunted prisoner. Her proud
gates

Open, and close upon him—for the first
And for the last time. There, amid the pride,
The glory, the magnificence, the wealth,
The power, the luxury, the pomp of Rome
Stands Paul, undazzled, undismayed ;—the glare,
Of wisdom, of philosophy, of wit
At Athens he had faced, and preached the God
Which e'en the Areopagus knew not.

Now to the mighty Capitol he wends
His way magnificent, amid the fanes
And gorgeous temples of the immortal gods.
The seven hills shall echo to his voice,
The Tiber's banks repeat it, and the groves
Umbrageous of Egeria shall hear,
With sacred reverence, of the name of CHRIST.

He comes, a wanderer from far-off climes,
A prisoner bound, but by the Spirit sent,
To teach the Senate and the Priests of Rome,
That Jove is not their god, nor Juno queen ;
That all their deities must yield to Him
Who on the tree of Golgotha expired,
But lives, resuscitated from the dead.
A dwelling—in the midst of those vast piles

Of pagan grandeur—was allotted him ;
 Where he was suffered to remain alone,
 Save with the soldier, placed to guard him there.

Three days in solitude he spent and peace,
 Musing upon the destiny of Rome—
 The focus now of superstition vast—
 To be transformed (he read the omnipotent
 Decrees of Heaven) into the capital
 And centre of religion. That pure ray,
 Which had already beamed upon the cloud
 Of paganism—enkindled by the hands
 Of Peter, once the fisherman obscure
 Of Galilee—was, with a light divine
 Of truth and wisdom, to dispel the gloom
 That brooded on the city, and the WORLD. (1)

Paul, indefatigable still, despite

(1) Rome had been visited by Peter previously to the arrival of Paul ; and the *brethren* or Christians were numerous, as he himself testifies in his Epistle to the Romans, declaring that their faith was spoken of all over the world. The focus of ancient pagan superstition became, in the lapse of time, the centre of Christian truth and unity. With lofty eloquence St. Leo the Great exults in the miraculous change which God wrought in that mistress of the earth.

Paul was kindly treated, perhaps, for two reasons. One was, on account of the letter of Festus, who must have assured the Emperor that he did not find him guilty of any crime. The other, of the report given by the Centurion Julius, who became his admirer, and probably his neophyte, who could not but speak of him in the most exalted terms. Thus were accomplished the designs of God, who wished that he should be a prisoner, but yet free enough to labor for the propagation of the faith.



View of Ancient Rome

His hardships and his labors, in whose breast
The fire of zeal glowed quenchless and intense,
Assembled round him all the leading Jews,
And thus addressed them : " Without any cause—
Men, brethren, having nothing done against
The people, or the customs of our fathers,
I was made prisoner in Jerusalem,
And then delivered to the Romans' hands,
Who, having heard the charges, and inquired
Into the grounds on which they were alleged,
Would have released me—for no cause they found
Why I should suffer death ;—but as the Jews
Opposed their just decision, I was forced—
Not that I meant my nation to accuse—
To appeal to Cæsar. Wherefore did I long
My case to state before you :—with these chains,
Because of Israel's hope, have I been bound."

Attentively they hearkened, and replied :
" No letters from Judea, touching thee
Or thy imprisonment, have we received ;
Nor from our brethren who have hither come,
Heard we of any evil thou hast done.
But from thyself we now desire to learn
Thy sentiments ; for as regards this sect,
We know that it is gainsaid everywhere."

A day was designated, when in crowds
They flocked about his lodgings. He appeared,
Victorious in his irons and sublime.
Then he began God's kingdom to expound,

Arraying testimonies of the truth,
 And from the ancient prophets, and the law
 Of Moses, proving Jesus to be CHRIST.
 From morn till eve, the crowds suspended hung
 On Paul's amazing eloquence ; his words
 Fell with conviction on the minds of some,
 But fruitlessly on others : 'mongst themselves,
 Agreeing not, contentious, they withdrew ;
 And as they went, Paul added one word more :
 " Well, through Isaiah, did the Holy Ghost
 Speak to our fathers : *'To this people go,
 And say to them : Your ears, indeed, shall hear,
 But ye shall understand not ; you shall see,
 And yet perceive not : for this people's heart
 Is gross become ; and they have sealed their ears,
 And closed their eyes, lest they should hear or see,
 And thus should be converted, and be healed.'* (1)
 Then be it known to you, that God hath sent
 Salvation to the Gentiles ; *they* will hear."
 The Jews, disputing fiercely with themselves,
 Departed from him. For two years entire
 In his own rented lodgings Paul abode,
 Where all who came he carefully received,
 Preaching to them the kingdom of the Lord,
 And, unrestrained and with full confidence,
 Teaching all things concerning JESUS CHRIST.

(1) Isaiah vi. 9. The small number of believers might have been led astray by the incredulity of the greater number. Hence they were fortified against this danger by the assurance that the incredulity of the majority was foretold ; and for this reason it was that this prophecy of Isaiah has been repeated six times in the New Testament.

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING WHAT HAS BEEN GATHERED FROM THE EPISTLES OF ST PAUL
CONCERNING WHAT PASSED DURING THE TWO YEARS OF
HIS IMPRISONMENT, UNTIL HIS DELIVERY.

He was detained as a prisoner in his lodgings; but this prison became a public school of Christianity, by the great concourse which the desire of seeing and hearing so great a man, attracted to it. "In chains though I be," he says, "I am an ambassador for Jesus Christ, so that therein I may be bold to speak according as I ought." (1) By some it was feared that his captivity might have proved an obstacle to the progress of religion—but it was the contrary. "Now, brethren," he wrote to the Philippians, (2) "I desire you should know that the things which have happened to me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds are made manifest in Christ, in all the court, and in all other places." Conversions were the consequence, and they multiplied so far as to form a kind of domestic church, even in the most dissolute of

(1) Pro quo legatione fungor in catenâ, ita ut in ipso audeam, sicut oportet me, loqui. (Eph. vi. 20.)

(2) Scire, autem, vos volo, fratres, quia circa me sunt, magis ad profectum venerunt Evangelii: ita ut vincula mea manifesta fierent in Christo in omni prætorio, et in cæteris hominibus. (Philip. i. 12, 13.)

all courts. When he salutes the Philippians, on the part of the Saints at Rome, he names especially some who were in the palace of Cesar. (1)

His success procured co-operation: some through true zeal; others through a secret jealousy, which they covered with an apparent zeal—as he himself informs us. “And many of the brethren in the Lord, growing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear. Some, indeed, even out of envy and contention; but some, also, for good-will preach Christ; some out of charity, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; and some out of contention preach Christ not sincerely, supposing that they raise affliction to my bands. But what then? So that by all means, whether by occasion or by truth, Christ be preached: in this I also rejoice; yea,” adds this admirable man, as far elevated above the weaknesses of humanity as heaven is above the earth, “and I will rejoice.” (2)

It is thus, that with the merit of what he himself did, he rendered his own the merit of what was done by

(1) *Salutant vos omnes sancti, maximè autem qui de Cæsaris domo sunt.* (Philip. iv. 22.)

(2) *Et plures e fratribus in Domino confidentes vinculis meis, abundantius auderent sine timore verbum Dei loqui. Quidam quidem, et propter invidiam et contentionem; quidam autem et propter bonam voluntatem Christum prædicant. Quidam ex charitate; scientes quoniam in defensionem Evangelii positus sum: quidam autem ex contentione Christum annuntiant non sincere, existimantes pressuram se suscitare vinculis meis. Quid enim? Dum omni modo, sive per occasionem, sive per veritatem, Christus annuntietur; et in hoc gaudeo, sed et gaudebo.* (Philip. i. 14—18.)

others, whatever the intention by which they were actuated. His zeal was not confined to Rome or Italy. He was in chains, but, to use his own expression, the word of God was not. (1) From the midst of his irons, he sent it to the remotest countries; and from the darkness of his obscure abode, he enlightened all nations and all times. For it was during his captivity at Rome that he wrote his Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the Laodiceans, (which has not come down to us;) the second to Timothy, that to Philemon, and to the Hebrews; in the last of which he shows, with as much depth as magnificence, the infinite superiority of the new over the ancient law; the divinity of its Founder; the excellence of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, who, while he is the eternal Pontiff, is, at the same time, the everlasting Victim.

If he received succor and consolation at the hands of the brethren, they were, on the other side, a subject of great trials to him. Many quitted him; some from lassitude, others from inconstancy. Besides the envious who spoke against him, he had also declared persecutors, such as Alexander the coppersmith, who did him much harm. (2) The Apostle delivered him over to Satan, with Hymeneus, for teaching perverse doctrines. (3) In order to avenge himself on Paul, that wicked man made use of every effort to bring upon him the infliction of capital punishment. But what

(1) *Verbum Dei non est alligatum.* (2 Tim. ii. 9.)

(2) *Alexander ærarius multa mala mihi ostendit.* (2 Tim. iv. 14.)

(3) 1 Tim. i. 20.

most afflicted him, was to see himself abandoned by all his friends, under circumstances in which they should have stood by him. The first time he had to speak in his own defence, no one dared to accompany him. He prays God to forgive them for this weakness; while their desertion does not discourage him. "But the Lord," he says, "stood by me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching may be accomplished, and that all the Gentiles may hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." (1) By this expression he designates the Emperor Nero, whose cruelty surpassed that of the most ferocious animals. He finished, however, by being devoured: but this happened nine years later, when, on the same day and for the same cause, he and the head of the Apostles, PETER, sealed, with their blood, the glorious testimony they had given of the Lord Jesus Christ;—to whom be honor, glory, and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

(1) In primâ meâ defensione nemo mihi adfuit, sed omnes me dereliquerunt. Non illis imputetur. Dominus, autem, mihi assistit, et confortavit me, ut per me prædicatio impleatur, et audiant omnes Gentiles: et liberatus sum de ore Leonis. (2 Tim. iv. 16, 17)

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